

EXPLORATIONS IN NEUTRALIZATION

by

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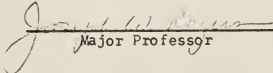
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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Statement of the Problem

Many current theories of juvenile delinquent behavior are based on the proposition that delinquency results from a set of norms antithetical to those of the dominant culture and, indeed, deriving their content by a process of hostile and negativistic reactions against the dominant culture.¹ David Matza and Gresham Sykes have presented an alternative or modified explanation for a large portion of juvenile delinquency.² They believe that the delinquent is by no means immune

¹Cohen's discussion of the delinquent subculture is the best example of this idea; however, Cloward and Ohlin and Miller also present this viewpoint. Albert K. Cohen, Delinquent Boys (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1955). Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin (Delinquency and Opportunity, New York: The Free Press), 1960. Walter B. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," Journal of Social Issues, XIV (1958), 5-19. Solomon Kobrin, "The Conflict of Values in Delinquency Areas," American Sociological Review, XVI (October 1951), 653-61.

²Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," American Sociological Review, XXII (December, 1957), 665-670. David Matza and Gresham M. Sykes, "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values," American Sociological Review, XXVI (November, 1961), 712-719. David Matza, Delinquency and Drift (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964).

or indifferent to the expectations of respectable society, that he has internalized the respectable value system, and that in many ways gives evidence of recognizing its moral and legal validity.

They argue that the juvenile delinquent would appear to be at least partially committed to the dominant social order in that he frequently exhibits guilt or shame when he violates its proscriptions.³ Furthermore, the elements of the childhood position in America make the theories of an oppositional value system or subculture improbable. Juveniles are surrounded by members of the adult society. Therefore, any oppositional subculture which might arise, would have to be insulated from the rest of society by a network of multiple affiliations. Juveniles are not isolated from the rest of society. They have contact with members of the conventional culture through mass media, schools, summer camps and parents, all of which are assumed to primarily represent the conventional culture. Even if there is a breach of relations between parent and child, the insulation is rarely more than partial.⁴ Fritz Redl and David Wineman also note the impossibility of isolation in their discussion of "value islands."⁵

If the delinquent is seen as at least partially committed to the dominant social order, there must be some explanation of how that order

³Sykes and Matza, op. cit., p. 666. Matza, op. cit., p. 40.

⁴Matza, op. cit., pp. 46-48.

⁵Fritz Redl and David Wineman, Children Who Hate (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1951), pp. 145-146.

may be violated by persons who nonetheless subscribe to it. Matza and Sykes believe that much delinquency is based on a set of justifications seen as valid by the delinquent, but not by the legal system or society at large. These justifications of deviance center around a set of techniques for neutralizing or deflecting the internal and external demands for conformity. These demands emerge from values whose legitimacy is, at least on some level, recognized.

It is the purpose of this thesis to examine, through empirical research, some of the basic propositions of Matza and Sykes.

Theoretical Background

While there exist many varied and divergent theoretical views of the deviant behavior of juveniles, most contemporary theories are traceable to the writings of Edwin Sutherland, Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton. As major antecedents to the work of Matza and Sykes, it is appropriate to consider them briefly.

Differential Association

Sutherland's theory of "differential association" hypothesizes that criminal behavior patterns are acquired in the same way that lawful behavior is acquired.⁶ That is, criminal behavior is learned in interaction with persons in a pattern of communication, and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes--whether in the direction of anticriminality or criminality--are learned from

⁶Edwin H. Sutherland and Donald R. Cressey, Principles of Criminology, 7th ed. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966), pp. 77-83.

persons whose attitudes are favorable to violation of the legal codes.

While differential association does not attempt to explain the origin of criminal values, it does stress the extent to which the social structure may impede or facilitate the acquisition of criminal values. Differential association stresses not only the importance of learning, but the significance of reference groups in the acquisition of criminal behavior patterns.⁷ It is on these two points that many of the contemporary theorists in juvenile delinquency begin their analysis and base their theory.

Anomie

The theory of anomie attempts to explain deviant behavior by focusing attention on the social structure, which is a source of pressure toward deviance. Durkheim used the concept to explain the phenomena of anomic suicide during times of crises such as economic depressions or rapidly changing social conditions.⁸ Further, during times of crises, social norms, which at other times were effective

⁷ Proposition 7 of Sutherland is the heart of this position: "Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity." (The frequency and duration of contact with criminal reference groups, the priority or time in the individual's life that he was first exposed and intensity or the emotional involvement with the reference group.) op. cit., p. 82.

⁸ Emile Durkheim, Suicide: A Study in Sociology, translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1951), Chapter 5.

controls for men's actions, become ineffective. Accordingly, Durkheim described this as a state of normlessness or "anomie."

Merton has elaborated on Durkheim's concept of anomie. His efforts are directed especially toward the relevance of social structure to non-conforming behavior. He distinguishes two elements of the social structure:

The first consists of culturally defined goals, purposes and interests, held out as legitimate objectives for all or for diversely located members of the society. The goals are more or less integrated . . . and roughly ordered in some hierarchy of value. Involving various degrees of sentiment and significance, the prevailing goals comprise a frame of aspirational reference The second element of the cultural structure defines, regulates and controls the acceptable modes of reaching out for these goals. Every social group invariably couples its cultural objectives with regulations, rooted in the mores or institutions, of allowable procedures for moving toward these objectives.⁹

Anomie, according to Merton, develops as a result of a breakdown in the relationship between the cultural goals and the institutionalized means of realizing them. Thus, he seeks to account for deviant behavior in terms of differential access to the cultural goals through legitimate channels. Utilizing disparities between cultural goals and institutional means, he developed a typology for classifying deviant behavioral types (Fig. 1).

Thus, by way of comparison, we see that Merton attempts to emphasize the structural origins of deviant behavior while Sutherland attempts to emphasize the social process whereby certain values and behavior patterns are acquired and perpetuated. The above approaches

⁹Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 132-133.

taken together account for much of the theoretical framework of contemporary theorists in deviant behavior.

<u>Modes of Adaptation</u>	<u>Cultural Goals</u>	<u>Institutional Means</u>
I. Conformity	+	+
II. Innovation	+	-
III. Ritualism	-	+
IV. Retreatism	-	-
V. Rebellion	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>

Fig. 1. A typology of modes of individual adaptation.¹⁰

Recent Theories of Juvenile Delinquency

The Delinquent Subculture and Status Deprivation

Albert Cohen in his book Delinquent Boys, combines the anomie tradition of Merton and Durkheim with the differential association concepts of Sutherland in explaining delinquent behavior. He asserts that the delinquent subculture is a response to the status deprivations suffered by boys of the lower-class. Lower-class boys, Cohen maintains,

¹⁰Code of symbols in Fig. 1 and 2: (+) signifies "acceptance," (-) signifies "rejection," and (+) signifies "rejection of prevailing values and substitution of new ones." Ibid., p. 140. This general typology has been questioned and extended: See Robert Dubin, "Deviant Behavior and Social Structure: Continuities in Social Theory," American Sociological Review, XXIV (April, 1959), 147-164; Richard A. Cloward, "Illegitimate Means, Anomie, and Deviant Behavior," American Sociological Review, XXIV (April, 1959), 164-176. See Merton's comments to these: Robert K. Merton, "Social Conformity, Deviation, and Opportunity-structures: A Comment on the Contributions of Dubin and Cloward," American Sociological Review, XXIV (April, 1959), 177-189.

are not all equipped to compete satisfactorily in a society dominated by middle-class values.

The delinquent subculture, we suggest, is a way of dealing with the problems of adjustment we have described. These problems are chiefly status problems: certain children are denied status in the respectable society because they cannot meet the criteria of the respectable status system. The delinquent subculture deals with these problems by providing criteria of status which these children can meet.¹¹

In order to combat their status deprivation, the lower-class delinquents (within their delinquent subculture) repudiate middle-class standards and adopt in their place its very antithesis. What is valued in the dominant middle-class is disvalued in the delinquent subculture. Thus, in reaction to middle-class values, the delinquent rejects the society that has rejected him.

Cohen, nevertheless maintains, that the break between middle-class morality and the delinquent subculture morality can never be complete.

. . . we would expect the delinquent boy who, after all, has been socialized in a society dominated by middle-class morality and who can never quite escape the blandishments of middle-class society, to seek to maintain his safeguards against seduction. Reaction-formation, in his case, should take the form of an "irrational," "malicious," "unaccountable" hostility to the enemy within the gates as well as without: the norms of the respectable middle-class society.¹² (underline added)

These safeguards include such mechanisms of adjustment as projection, rationalization, and substitution. That is, the delinquent may project his own behavior to those who would condemn him in order to alleviate

¹¹Cohen, op. cit., p. 121.

¹²Ibid., p. 133.

any guilt that he may feel for his own behavior. The formation of a subculture itself, Cohen maintains, is another means of solving the problem of conflicting value systems.

. . . nothing is so effective in allaying doubts and providing moral reassurance against a gnawing super-ego as the repeated emphatic, and articulate support and approval of other persons.¹³

Important to note for this thesis, is the fact that Cohen maintains that the delinquent never completely gives up his allegiance to middle-class norms but acknowledges their legitimacy secretly, while challenging them openly. Such acknowledgment appears to be unconscious or unrecognized, however, according to Cohen's formulation.¹⁴ We should also note that while the behavior pattern of the delinquent subculture is the very antithesis of the dominant value system, this behavior hypothetically must be rationalized by the delinquent through mechanisms of adjustment--projection, rationalization, substitution, etc.

Finally, it should be observed that the two above positions attributed to Cohen, represent part of a general modification made by him and James Short. This took place three years after Delinquent Boys had been written.¹⁵ This modified position appears to be an effort to redefine the strong "contraculture" position attributed to Cohen by other writers.¹⁶

¹³Albert K. Cohen and James F. Short, Jr., "Research in Delinquent Subcultures," Journal of Social Issues, XIV (1958), 21.

¹⁴Note Cloward and Ohlin's discussion of Cohen on this point. Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., pp. 133-139.

¹⁵Cohen and Short, op. cit., pp. 20-37.

¹⁶Note the discussion by John M. Martin and Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, Delinquent Behavior: A Redefinition of the Problem (New York: Random House, 1965), pp. 64-66.

Milton Yinger has suggested that the concept "contraculture" be used when "the normative system of a group contains, as a primary element, a theme of conflict with the values of the total society. . . ." ¹⁷ A subculture, on the other hand, represents a system of norms, values, and beliefs characteristic of groups smaller than a society, such as ethnic, racial or religious enclaves.

Delinquency and Opportunity

A further extension of the foregoing formulations is that of Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin.¹⁸ They, like Merton, maintain that institutionalized means are differentially available to various segments of society. They also maintain that not only are institutionalized means differentially available to various strata of society, but that illegitimate or non-institutionalized means are also differentially available. With the addition of this new dimension to Merton's typology, Cloward and Ohlin are able to differentiate between various subculture patterns of delinquency rather than a single delinquent subculture (Fig. 2). Also important to the Cloward and Ohlin typology is the fact that they differentiate delinquents according to reference group in determining cultural goals. That is, the delinquents' level of aspiration may entail a change in economic position without a change in

¹⁷Yinger was the first to distinguish between subculture and contraculture: see J. Milton Yinger, "Contraculture and Subculture," American Sociological Review, XXV (October, 1960), 625-635, quotation from page 629.

¹⁸Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit.

reference groups. Thus, the lower-class delinquent may wish for improvement in his economic position without the generally expected wish for membership within the middle-class.

<u>Modes of Adaptation</u>	<u>Cultural goals</u>	<u>Legitimate means</u>	<u>Illegitimate means</u>
Conformity	+	+	-
Criminal	+	-	+
Retreatist	-	-	-
Conflict	±	±	±

Fig. 2. A typology of modes of individual adaptation.¹⁹

In discussing the conditions that give rise to the three types of delinquent subcultures, Cloward and Ohlin place heavy emphasis upon the social structure and the opportunity structure.

The criminal subculture is characterized by theft, extortion, and other illegal means of securing income. It is a training group for later entrance into the organization of the professional criminal. The criminal gang is found in areas where there is integration of offenders at various age levels and close integration of the carriers of conventional and illegitimate values.

¹⁹The typology was constructed in the form presented here by Elliott but the original creation of the typology was that of Cloward and Ohlin. Delbert S. Elliott, Delinquency, Opportunity, and Patterns of Orientation (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Washington, 1961), p. 12. Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., Chapter 7.

The member of the criminal gang is the individual who accepts the dominant middle-class goals but perceives greater access to and greater opportunity in achieving these goals through the illegitimate opportunity structure within the community.

The conflict subculture results from a lack of unity and cohesiveness in which a state of social disorganization prevails. The forces causing this disorganization and instability come from high rates of vertical and geographic mobility; massive housing projects which disrupt existing community organization; and changing land use due to expansion of adjacent commercial and industrial areas.

Thus, the areas characterized by conflict subcultures lack opportunity in both the conventional and criminal spheres. Lacking access to either the legal or illegal opportunity structure, the adolescent seeks status through violence in groups.

The retreatist subculture is characterized by the use of drugs or alcohol in a type of withdrawal behavior. The retreatist subculture is found in much the same type of social situation as that of the conflict subculture.

The retreatist may be one of two types. The first has experienced failure in the legitimate opportunity structure and has no access to illegitimate structures due to internalized prohibitions. The second is the individual who is the "double failure," that is, he is not able to succeed either through criminal or legitimate means.

Cloward and Ohlin maintain that a significant step for the delinquent in the withdrawal of sentiments supporting the legitimacy

of conventional norms is the attribution of the cause of failure to the social order rather than to oneself. The way is cleared for deviant behavior if one attributes his failures to injustice in the social system. By the same token, however, if one attributes failure to one's own personal faults, then the system is not questioned and the way is not clear for deviant behavior.

Whether the "failure" blames the social order or himself is of central importance to the understanding of deviant conduct. When a person ascribes his failure to injustice in the social system, he may criticize that system, bend his efforts toward reforming it, or dissociate himself from it--in other words, he may become alienated from the established set of social norms. He may even be convinced that he is justified in evading these norms in his pursuit of success goals. The individual who locates the source of his failure in his own inadequacy, on the other hand, feels pressure to change himself rather than the system. . . . By implication, then, attributing failure to one's own faults reveals an attitude supporting the legitimacy of the existing norms.²⁰

The process just described reveals that, for the delinquent, unjust deprivations work to cancel out all obligations to the established system. Thus, the individual is guided by expediency alone in realizing his success goals.

Through the process of attributing blame for one's failures to the established social order rather than to one's self, the problem of guilt is solved. "One does not feel very guilty about violating a rule which one does not view as binding one's conduct."²¹ However, Cloward and Ohlin make clear that deviance is not simply an asocial or primitive

²⁰Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., pp. 111-112.

²¹Ibid., p. 131.

reaction. The delinquents are aware of the difference between right and wrong, between conventional behavior and rule-violating behavior.

They may not care about the difference, or they may enjoy flouting the rules of the game, or they may have decided that illegitimate practices get them what they want more efficiently than legitimate practices. But, to say this is not quite the same as to say that they do not understand the rules.²²

In addition, Cloward and Ohlin point out, using Sorokin's distinction between law norms and moral norms, that when a juvenile becomes a member of a delinquent group, he is required to accept its law norms.²³ He is obliged to perform the duties and receive the rights to which this position entitles him, and violation of these norms exposes him to appropriate sanctions.²⁴ Law norms and moral norms usually support each other, as in the case of laws against murder and theft and moral injunctions not to kill or steal. Cloward and Ohlin emphasize, however, that this need not be the case, and persons faced with a discrepancy between the two may function effectively if they manage to develop means of discounting or neutralizing the significance of the moral issues related to the pattern of conduct to which they have given allegiance.²⁵

²²Ibid., p. 37.

²³Pitirim A. Sorokin, Society, Culture, and Personality (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 72-85.

²⁴This system of reciprocity (each party has rights and duties) appears to be essential for any stability of the social system, but specifically for our purposes the stability of the gang. For a discussion of this see: Alvin W. Gouldner, "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement," American Sociological Review, XXV (April, 1960), 161-178.

²⁵Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., pp. 16-20.

Cloward and Ohlin's formulations represent an important contribution to delinquent subculture theory. Like Cohen, they see delinquency as a response on the part of lower-class boys to the socially structured gap between their aspirations and the means available to them for realizing the aspirations. Unlike Cohen, and representing a significant extension of Cohen's formulations, Cloward and Ohlin maintain that the response need not be the same for every lower-class youth faced with aspiration problems. Their main contribution appears to be in their distinction between the types of responses the delinquent may make and the importance of the opportunity structure in directing these responses.

Delinquency as a Product of the Lower-Class

Walter Miller's theory of delinquent behavior is quite different from that of Cohen or Cloward and Ohlin. Miller's description of the delinquency phenomena is distinctively a subculture theory as opposed to contraculture.

Miller maintains that in the case of gang delinquency, the cultural system which exerts the most direct influence on behavior is that of the lower-class community rather than the so-called delinquent subculture.²⁶ Thus, from the start, it should be kept in mind that Miller suggests that the lower-class culture is the most influential factor in the behavior of lower class delinquent youngsters. It should be emphasized, however, that he does not contend that violation of

²⁶Miller, op. cit., pp. 5-19.

middle-class norms is the dominant component of motivation, but is a by-product of action primarily oriented to the lower-class.

There is a substantial segment of present-day American society whose way of life, values, and characteristic patterns of behavior are the product of a distinctive cultural system which may be termed "lower-class." Evidence indicates that this cultural system is becoming increasingly distinctive, and that the size of the group which shares this tradition is increasing. The lower-class way of life, in common with that of all distinctive cultural groups, is characterized by a set of focal concerns--areas or issues which command widespread and persistent attention and a high degree of emotional involvement.²⁷

The key to Miller's formulations of delinquency rest in his consideration of these focal concerns. There are six focal concerns:²⁸

Trouble: Miller maintains that trouble and non-trouble producing behavior represents both a major basis for deriving status and an internalized conflict potential for the individual. That is, "getting into trouble" is not in itself overtly defined as prestige-conferring, but is implicitly recognized as a means to other valued ends. Thus, frequently getting into trouble is multifunctional, and serves to accomplish several sets of valued ends.

Toughness: Its most important components are physical prowess, masculinity, absence of sentimentality and the conceptualization of women as conquest objects. Miller believes that the concern for toughness may be explained by the fact that women often serve as primary objects of identification during pre-adolescent years and the over-concern for masculinity is a type of reaction-formation to this fact.

²⁷Ibid., p. 6.

²⁸Ibid., p. 8.

Smartness: This involves the use of as little physical effort as possible to achieve valued goals and ends. Thus, the ability to outsmart, "out-fox" or "take" others, while at the same time avoid being out-witted or "taken," is highly valued within the lower-class.

Excitement: This often takes the form of over-indulgence in alcohol, gambling, drugs, sex and a night out on the town. Miller points out that since there is always a good likelihood that being "out on the town" will eventuate in fights, the practice involves elements of sought risk and desire for danger.

Fate: Fate means fortune or luck. Many lower-class people believe that their lives are subject to a set of forces over which they have relatively little control. However, this does not take the form of religious organizations but fate in the sense of destiny--man as a pawn of magical powers. Thus, many lower-class individuals believe that to get "in the money" is a result of being lucky--simply fate.

Autonomy: This is the desire for independence from authority and control, often expressed by such phrases as: "I don't need nobody" or "I can take care of myself." Miller points out, however, that actual patterns of behavior reveal a discrepancy between overt sentiment and what is covertly valued. This is seen in the fact that many lower-class youth join the military, are sent to disciplinary school, prison or correctional institutions which provide a strict and detailed set of rules governing behavior.

Miller's major thesis regarding the motivation of delinquent acts can be summarized in three propositions:

1. Following cultural practices which compose essential elements of the total life pattern of lower-class culture automatically violates certain legal norms.
2. In instances where alternate avenues to similar objectives are available, the non-law-abiding avenue frequently provides a smaller investment of energy.
3. The "demanded" response to certain situations recurrently engendered within lower-class culture involves the commission of illegal acts.²⁹

Miller differs from Cohen who explains delinquency in terms of a contraculture phenomena and Cloward and Ohlin who explain delinquency in terms of opportunity structure. Thus, Miller's most significant contribution lies in the fact that delinquency is viewed not as a rejection by lower-class youth of middle-class values, but as the result of values and norms that are characteristic of the lower-class itself.

Delinquency and Neutralization

Matza and Sykes present a view of delinquency unlike those thus far discussed and yet at the same time very much like parts of the formulations of each of the writers presented. Their theory rests on the basic proposition that:

Much delinquency is based on what is essentially an unrecognized extension of defenses to crimes, in the form of justifications for deviances that are seen as valid by the delinquent but not by the legal system or society at large.³⁰

²⁹Ibid., p. 18.

³⁰Sykes and Matza, op. cit., p. 666.

Basic to this proposition, is the understanding that social rules or norms seldom, if ever, take the form of categorical imperatives. Norms are qualified guides for action and contain a great deal of flexibility.³¹ Thus, the moral injunction against killing does not apply to an enemy during combat in time of war. Talcott Parsons notes this flexibility of norms in his treatment of deviant behavior:

We have emphasized the importance of the fact that all normative patterns are to an important degree generalized relative to the particularity of the situation in which they apply.³²

It is this flexibility in criminal law that allows for such defenses to crimes as nonage, necessity, insanity, drunkenness, compulsion and self-defense, and it is this flexibility, Matza and Sykes maintain, that enables the delinquent to violate norms in a social order to which he simultaneously subscribes.³³

Max Weber has pointed out that a thief recognizes the legitimacy of legal rules without accepting their moral validity, e.g., the thief orients his action to the validity of the criminal law in that he acts surreptitiously while at the same time defying its moral "rightness."³⁴ However, the argument made by Matza and Sykes is that the

³¹Williams' discussion of the "flexibility" of norms was later elaborated on by Matza and Sykes and applied to delinquency. Robin M. Williams, American Society (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), p. 30. Matza and Sykes, op. cit., pp. 712-719.

³²Talcott Parsons, The Social System (New York: The Free Press, 1951), p. 269.

³³This concept in criminal law is known as mens rea (guilty mind), and it refers to intent or state of mind accompanying an act manifesting a purpose harmful to society or an individual.

³⁴Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1947), pp. 124-126.

juvenile delinquent recognizes both the legitimacy of the social order and its moral "rightness."

Sorokin makes the distinction between "law norms" and "moral norms."³⁵ Law norms establish a two-sided imperative-attributive relationship between two parties. The moral norm is one-sided; that is, it is imperative in the sense that it urges someone to pursue a particular form of conduct, but it is not attributive since there is no one rightfully entitled to demand it, e.g., personal moral beliefs are one's own private feelings while law norms are public and society requires behavioral compliance to them.

Cloward and Ohlin use Sorokin's distinction to show how the delinquent, by discounting or neutralizing the moral norms, may function effectively in a delinquent subculture.³⁶ However, the picture that Matza and Sykes present is one in which the delinquent accepts both and must find some means of discounting or neutralizing both in order to engage in his delinquent activities.

The concept of neutralization of norms is concerned with the content of what is learned by the delinquent in interaction with other delinquents as it applies to law violation, and how, once learned, it is used to violate norms which are accepted as legitimate. The techniques by which the delinquent neutralizes the norms which he accepts as legitimate are viewed as following the deviant act and as protecting the individual from self-blame and the blame of others. Further, Matza

³⁵Sorokin, op. cit., pp. 72-85.

³⁶Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., pp. 16-20.

and Sykes maintain that neutralizations precede deviant behavior and make the deviant behavior possible.³⁷ Thus, social controls that serve to inhibit deviant acts are rendered inoperative, thereby freeing the individual to engage in delinquency without serious damage to his self-image. According to Matza and Sykes:

It is by learning these techniques that the juvenile becomes delinquent, rather than by learning moral imperatives, values or attitudes standing in direct contradiction to those of the dominant society.³⁸

Matza and Sykes have described five techniques of neutralization:

(1) The Denial of Responsibility, (2) The Denial of Injury, (3) The Denial of the Victim, (4) The Condemnation of the Condemners, and (5) The Appeal to Higher Loyalties.³⁹

The denial of responsibility centers around the idea that if the delinquent can define himself as lacking responsibility for his deviant actions, the disapproval of self and others is reduced in effectiveness as a restraining influence. The claim is often made that the offense was an accident. However, the delinquent goes much further than mere accident; he often claims that his actions are beyond his own control. He asserts that his actions are due to unloving parents, bad companions, or a slum neighborhood. He is quick to pick up the sociological and psychological explanations of poor environment

³⁷Neutralization is not to be confused with rationalization. Rationalization refers to an acceptable explanation for behavior which has its origin in the unconscious and takes place after the event. Neutralization on the other hand, takes place before the event and renders social controls in the form of norms ineffective.

³⁸Sykes and Matza, op. cit., p. 667.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 667-669.

as a cause of his behavior. He learns that by viewing himself as more acted upon than acting, the way is prepared for deviance from the dominant normative system without the necessity of a frontal assault on the norms themselves.

The denial of injury is concerned with the injury or harm involved in the delinquent acts. Criminal law distinguishes between crimes which are mala in se and mala prohibita and the delinquent does the same in evaluating the wrongness of his actions. For the delinquent, it is a question of whether or not anyone is clearly hurt by his actions. Thus, vandalism is called mischief and persons whose property is destroyed can well afford it; auto theft is viewed as borrowing, and gang fighting as a private quarrel and of no concern to the community in general. Through this process, the link between acts and their consequences may be broken by the technique of denial of injury.

The delinquent often denies that there is a victim involved in his actions. The injury inflicted by the delinquent is not an injury at all; it is rightful retaliation or punishment on an unfair teacher and thefts from a store are viewed as punishment for a "crooked" store owner.

Those persons who are denied the normal prerogatives of the victim are often, according to Matza and Sykes, the conventionally immoral and detested. Thus, homosexuals, drunkards, chiselers, minority groups or members of discredited political groups may, because of their

own failing, forfeit the right to initiate the criminal process.⁴⁰ The rationale is that they cannot and ought not complain because by their own immoral conduct they have forfeited that right. Thus, the question of moral competence typically addressed to officials may be extended to victims: Who are you to sit in judgment of me?

The victim may also be denied in the sense that there is no individual designated as a victim. That is, acts committed against property where the victim is absent, unknown or some vague abstraction such as a corporation represent such cases.

The condemnation of the condemners means that the delinquent shifts the focus from his own actions to the motives and behavior of those who would condemn him for his actions.⁴¹ (This technique is also known as rejection of the rejectors and it may result from reaction-formation.)⁴² The delinquent may claim that his condemners are, in fact, deviants in disguise, hypocrites or impelled by personal spite; the police are corrupt, stupid and brutal; teachers show favoritism; and parents "take it out" on their kids. It is clear that by questioning the motives of those who condemn, the wrongfulness of one's own behavior is more easily repressed.

⁴⁰The "rolling" of drunks is discussed by Clifford R. Shaw, The Jack-Roller (Philadelphia: Albert Saifer, 1931). Also, Schur includes homosexuality, abortion, and drug addiction among victimless crimes. Edwin Schur, Crimes Without Victims (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965).

⁴¹This is much like the biblical injunction: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone" The Bible, King James Version, Book of John, Chapter 8, verse 7.

⁴²Lloyd W. McCorkle and Richard Korn, "Resocialization Within Walls," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCXCIII (May, 1954), 88-89. Cohen, op. cit., p. 133. Cohen and Short, op. cit., p. 21.

The appeal to higher loyalties concerns the possibility that the delinquent may be forced to choose between two modes of behavior, one in violation of conventional society's norms and the other in violation of norms attributed to a smaller group--the gang or friendship clique.⁴³ The idea is that when forced to make a choice between the two, the juvenile feels greater attachment to his friends--one must never "chicken out on a buddy" or "rat on a friend." The act is still wrong, but less wrong because it was motivated and inspired by sentiments that in a different context everyone would consider fine and noble. In this case, the conventional norms are not rejected, but other norms involving a higher loyalty and considered to be more pressing are accorded precedence.⁴⁴

Thus, Matza and Sykes do not suggest that delinquents withdraw their sentiments supporting the legitimacy of the established system; rather, they assert that the delinquent defines his extenuating circumstances in such a manner that deviance may be regarded as justifiable.

Summary

The controversy between the theories of an oppositional delinquent subculture and those that stress the integration of the delinquent

⁴³This problem was noted earlier in discussion of Cloward and Ohlin. See footnote 23.

⁴⁴Wheeler's research regarding the expectations and perceptions of the staff and inmates in the prison community on the question of "ratting" seems to uphold this viewpoint. Stanton Wheeler, "Role Conflict in the Correctional Community," In Donald R. Cressey, ed., The Prison: Studies in Institutional Organization and Change (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961), pp. 236-237.

into the normative system have many similar points. (1) While the theories of a delinquent subculture stress an oppositional value system among delinquents, they also incorporate into their formulations such neutralization techniques as reaction-formation and the function of the gang in sustaining an oppositional system.⁴⁵ Likewise, the theory represented by Matza and Sykes also stresses the importance of the gang or friendship group as a reinforcing agent. But, Matza considers this group to be a subculture of delinquency, that is, a setting in which the commission of delinquency is common knowledge among a group of juveniles; and what is important is publicity.⁴⁶ Matza maintains that while a small proportion of the juveniles may discover that they are, in fact, committed to their misdeeds, a larger proportion remain privately uncommitted but publicly a receiver and transmitter of miscues suggesting commitment. Thus, what appears to some theorists as an oppositional subculture, Matza sees as a set of shared misunderstandings about the commitment of others.

(2) Cohen contends that the delinquent retains a belief in the legitimacy of the conventional norms but that he maintains a secret but repressed desire for what he openly rejects. Only slightly different from Cohen, Matza and Sykes contend that the delinquent consciously supports the dominant normative value system. That is, he does not

⁴⁵Cohen and Short emphasize that reaction-formation is a technique of neutralization, Cohen and Short, op. cit., p. 21. Consideration of the friendship group as a reinforcing agent: Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., p. 11 and pp. 124-130. Cohen and Short, op. cit., p. 21.

⁴⁶Matza, op. cit., pp. 33-64.

repudiate conventional norms; he neutralizes them. On the other hand, Cloward and Ohlin maintain that the delinquent, through a process of alienation, rejects the conventional norms.

Delinquents have withdrawn their support from established norms and invested officially forbidden forms of conduct with a claim to legitimacy in the light of their special situation.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, Cloward and Ohlin contend that delinquents may claim that theft is legitimate due to their special situation; the delinquent also recognizes that at the same time his behavior is morally wrong.⁴⁸

The distinction between the legal and moral rightness of an act may seem unimportant; however, one must recognize as Cloward and Ohlin point out:

It is possible for persons faced with such a discrepancy to function effectively, especially if they manage to develop means of discounting, de-emphasizing, or neutralizing the significance of the moral issues related to the pattern of conduct to which they have given allegiance.⁴⁹ (underline added)

⁴⁷Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

⁴⁸Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., p. 19 and Sorokin, op. cit., p. 49.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 18.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design calls for a comparative study of delinquent neutralizers and non-neutralizers. Questionnaires were administered to delinquent boys and the information contained in the questionnaires comprises the empirical data for this thesis. The kinds of variables measured by the questionnaire and the procedures used in collecting the data are discussed in this chapter.

Data Collection

The Respondents

While it is recognized that there are many difficulties involved with the problem of defining delinquency,¹ for this study a delinquent is defined as any individual referred by the juvenile court, the police, school or some other person or social agency to the Boys Industrial School (B.I.S.) in Topeka, Kansas. The B.I.S. is a correctional institution for delinquent boys in Kansas. While the boys there represent a

¹The problem of defining delinquency and the use of official statistics in delinquency research is well known; thus, it will not be discussed in this study. See: Donald R. Cressey, "Crime," and Albert K. Cohen and James F. Short Jr., "Juvenile Delinquency," in Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet, (editors) Contemporary Social Problems (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1961). P. W. Tappan, "Who Is the Criminal?" American Sociological Review, XII (February, 1946), 96-102.

cross-section of the state of Kansas, it should be recognized that any one of a number of acts and behaviors constitute delinquency and that the administration of the law must surely be dispensed unevenly among the counties of Kansas.² This group was selected because it was believed they could provide needed insight on and empirical testability of propositions derived from the work of Matza and Sykes. Further, they constituted an accessible sample of sufficient size representing the delinquent population of the entire state as it is officially defined.

²The Juvenile Code of the State of Kansas specifies six types of children or acts which when committed may result in institutionalization:

1. A Delinquent Child. A delinquent child is a boy or girl less than 18 years of age who has committed an act which would be a felony if he or she were an adult. In addition, a child is considered delinquent if adjudged a miscreant three times.
2. Miscreant. A miscreant child is a boy or girl less than 18 years of age who has committed an act which would be a misdemeanor if he or she were an adult. In addition, a child is considered a miscreant if adjudged wayward three times.
3. Wayward. A wayward child is one whose behavior is injurious to his or her welfare, who has deserted home without cause, or who is disobedient to parents or guardian.
4. Traffic Offender. A traffic offender is a boy or girl less than 16 years of age who violates a statute or ordinance relating to traffic or relating to the operation of self-propelled or non-self-propelled vehicles.
5. Truant. A truant child is one who habitually skips school when required by law to attend.
6. Dependent and Neglected. A dependent and neglected child is a boy or girl less than 16 years of age, (a) whose parents do not provide proper care; (b) whose parents abandoned or mistreated him or her; (c) who has an occupation, environment or association injurious to his or her welfare; (d) who is otherwise without proper care, custody or support or (e) who because of the parent's neglect, has been placed in a children's aid society or is being supported by the county or state.

See: A Guide to The Juvenile Code, State of Kansas, Office of Attorney General (mimeograph), 1966, pp. 2-3.

Population and Sample

The population for the study consisted of all males between the ages of thirteen and eighteen as of July 3, 1967, who were institutionalized at the B.I.S. in Topeka, Kansas. The sample design called for questionnaires to be given to all the boys within this age group.

While the total number of boys attending the school varied during the time that the questionnaires were administered due to dismissals, home visits, summer vacations and off-campus work, the attending population of the school numbered for any one day approximately 210.

Original plans called for a stratified random sample of the boys previously described. However, it was decided that all boys in attendance should be questioned so that there would be enough cases to warrant statistical comparison while utilizing controls. This presented problems, however, because the total number of boys available for questioning varied from day to day. Thus 80 percent of the boys in the population of 210 were questioned. While the rules of the institution regarding personal information files did not allow a close comparison between those boys who were not questioned and those who were, officials at the school assured this author that those who were not questioned were randomly missed and did not represent a sufficiently separate group which would bias our inferences.

Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaires were administered during a seven day period. The school is divided into cottage living quarters according to age, thus, the number living in any one cottage varies greatly. Each cottage was visited two to three times in an attempt to question every boy in the cottage.

The respondents were given one day prior notice by their cottage parents that someone would be visiting them to give a "test." The contents of the "test" or the questions asked were not revealed until they read the questionnaire for themselves.

The questionnaires were given in groups of from 10 to 15 boys each. At the time the questionnaires were given out, the boys were told that the questionnaires were part of a study of boys in delinquent homes and the information they were to give would represent an important part of that study. It was also explained that the questionnaires were not "tests" but were more like an opinion poll and the information they gave bore no relationship to their current or future status at the school. This explanation was an attempt to correct the "test" image given to the questionnaires by the cottage parents. They were also assured, in addition, that the answers they gave in the questionnaire would be kept in the strictest confidence and thus their identities would not be revealed. The questionnaires took between 20 and 30 minutes to complete. As each boy completed the questionnaire, he was asked to deposit it face down in a closed ballot-type box to further assure anonymity.

A second problem which had been anticipated developed. The officials at the institution had expressed concern over the fact that the general literacy level among the boys was very low and they may not be able to read all the questions. This was experienced, but not to the degree that had been feared. If the respondents could not read a particular word, it was read for them; however, no attempt was made to define words that were not in the respondent's vocabulary. This was

done because of fear that in attempting to define words for the respondents, their answer might be biased. This refusal to define words that the respondents did not understand may explain, in part, why, on occasion, one or two questions were not answered out of an otherwise complete questionnaire. Of the 170 boys that took the questionnaire, only six did not have sufficient reading skill to complete the questionnaires. These six boys were excluded from the study.³

Coding and Processing

All information contained in the questionnaires was coded, punched on IBM cards, and processed on high-speed computers. The particular coding techniques used on specific variables will be considered in later chapters where these variables are discussed.

Statistical Tests

Essentially, statistical analysis of the data in this thesis will center around two tests. Where other tests are employed, the test will be discussed at that point.

Chi square will be used throughout when neutralizers and non-neutralizers are compared and contrasted on the several independent variables. This statistic can be used to test goodness of fit or

³The effect of excluding these six boys is not known. They were not able to complete enough of the questionnaire to make any judgment regarding the trends of their answers. In fact, none of them were able to complete Part I of the questionnaire. Only one of the six boys admitted to the interviewer that he could not read the questions, while the others simply turned in unanswered questionnaires.

independence of samples.⁴ It is a nonparametric statistic that may be used with nominal levels of measurement to which most of the data in Chapter IV corresponds.⁵

The second statistic that will be used is Goodman and Kruskal's gamma. Gamma is also a nonparametric statistic; however, differing from chi square, it measures the strength or degree of relationship between two variables. Gamma is designed to deal with ordinal or ranked data.⁶ It is symmetric, thus, it varies in value between -1 and +1. Gamma will be used primarily in Chapter III where most of the data meets the requirements of the statistic.⁷

While there has been a great deal of discussion regarding "the sacredness of .05" throughout recent sociological literature, this

⁴For a discussion of the properties of chi square see: Sidney Siegel, Nonparametric Statistics (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), pp. 104-111.

⁵Nominal levels of measurement may be defined as numbers or other symbols that are used to identify the groups to which various like objects belong. See: Ibid., pp. 22-23.

⁶Ordinal or ranked data may be defined as data in which objects in one category of a scale are not only different from the objects in the other categories but that they stand in some kind of relation to them either "less than" or "greater than." op. cit., pp. 23-26.

⁷For a discussion of the properties of gamma see: Robert S. Weiss, Statistics in Social Research (New York: John Wiley, 1968), pp. 201-204 and pp. 269-274; Herbert L. Costner, "Criteria for Measures of Association," American Sociological Review, XXX (June, 1965), 341-353; and Robert H. Somers, "A New Asymmetric Measure of Association of Ordinal Variables," American Sociological Review, XXVII, 799-811.

arbitrary level was decided upon.⁸ The character of the data itself prompted the decision to use this level. Chapter III contains a great deal of reference group data and Chapter IV contains data on norms; thus, the data in each chapter are conceptually interrelated. By using the .05 level as the cutting point, rather than a level such as .10 or .20, the probability of committing a type I error will be reduced--rejecting a true hypothesis. The conceptual interrelationship of the data will allow us to detect trends in the data that are not significant at the .05 level which might have been significant at a decreased level.

Specification of Variables

Neutralization

Matza and Sykes maintain that delinquents must neutralize internalized norms before they can commit deviant behavior. Cohen seems to agree with Matza and Sykes, and Cloward and Ohlin suggest that the technique one uses to explain his failure is related to his attachment to the legitimate normative structure, i.e., if an individual blames the social structure or someone else for his failure rather than blaming himself, he is free to commit deviant acts without any conflict of norms.⁹

⁸For a discussion of levels of significance see: James K. Skipper, Anthony L. Guenther, and Gilbert Nass, "The Sacredness of .05: A Note Concerning the Uses of Statistical Levels of Significance in Social Science," The American Sociologist, II, (February, 1967), 16-18; Hubert M. Blalock, Jr., Social Statistics (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 122-125.

⁹Note Chapter I for a fuller discussion of these ideas.

Delbert Elliott has investigated the blame orientation of delinquents and non-delinquents following the Cloward and Ohlin line of reasoning.¹⁰ He used a projective technique which measured the reactions of delinquents and non-delinquents to frustrating experiences. The responses were scored on the basis of whether the respondent attributed the blame to his external environment or to himself. He found that while his data did not give overwhelming evidence that delinquents were blame-rejecting and non-delinquents blame-accepting, Elliott suggests:

. . . while it cannot be positively concluded that delinquents are more extrapunitive (other-blaming), it can be concluded that they are less intropunitive (blame-accepting) than non-delinquents.¹¹ (words in parentheses are added)

The degree of neutralization among delinquents will be considered the major dependent variable for this study.

Neutralization is defined as a method whereby an individual renders behavioral norms inoperative, thereby freeing himself to engage in behavior which would otherwise be considered deviant. Neutralization was measured by a series of nine statements designed to include the five neutralization techniques as outlined by Matza and Sykes and also to include the overriding characteristic of neutralization--the general assessment of responsibility for delinquent behavior.¹²

¹⁰ Delbert S. Elliott, Delinquency, Opportunity, and Patterns of Orientations, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Washington, 1961, Chapter VI.)

¹¹ Ibid., p. 144.

¹² The author wishes to express his indebtedness to Imogene Simmons for use of the neutralization items which were created by her.

The following is a list of the statements used and their relation to the neutralization techniques discussed by Matza and Sykes:

- I. The Denial of Injury: (A) What I did was not so bad, no one was really hurt.
- II. The Denial of Responsibility: (A) I got into trouble because I got in with the wrong boys. (B) The trouble was an accident, which I could not help.
- III. The Denial of the Victim: (A) If anyone was hurt by what I did, they either deserved it or could afford it.
- IV. Condemnation of the Condemners: (A) Unfair teachers are to blame for my being sent to the B.I.S. (B) The judge and the court were against me from the start.
- V. The Appeal to Higher Loyalties: (A) I got into trouble because I couldn't run out on my friends.
- VI. Assessment of Responsibility for Delinquent Behavior: (A) I have no one to blame but myself for being sent to the B.I.S. (B) I deserved to be sent to the B.I.S.

Each respondent was given five alternative responses for each statement. The alternative responses ranged from strongly agree through undecided to strongly disagree.¹³ The response alternatives were given a weight of from one to five in the direction of the greatest neutralization. Thus, the highest possible score would be 45 indicating the greatest amount of neutralization and the lowest score would be 9 indicating the least amount of neutralization. Later, however, it was decided that

¹³Seven of the nine statements in the neutralization instrument required reverse scoring. Edwards has suggested that half of the selected statements should be favorable while the other half should consist of unfavorable statements, thus reversing the scoring system. "The advantage of having both kinds of statements represented in the final scale is to minimize response sets of subjects that might be generated if only favorable or unfavorable statements were included in the scale." Allen L. Edwards, Techniques of Attitude Scale Construction (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), p. 155.

if indeed the nine statements did represent statements with a common underlying content (that of neutralization) or if some of the statements could be eliminated from the original set of nine, interpretation would be facilitated and replication by others enhanced.

In order to achieve this, the Guttman scaling technique was employed.¹⁴ In brief, the technique seeks to ascertain the possibility of ordering statements such that respondents who answered a given question in one direction all have higher ranks than persons who answered the same question in the opposite direction. The five alternative responses were divided into two sets. The two responses representing the greatest neutralization were given a weight of 1. The remaining three were given a weight of 0. The undecided category was given a weight of 0 because it was believed that an indecision in terms of the statement did not represent a firm neutralization response.

The nine statements when scaled produced a coefficient of reproducibility of .839. With the elimination of two statements representing the greatest amount of errors ("The trouble was an accident which I could not help," and "What I did was not so bad, no one was really hurt.") the coefficient of reproducibility increased to

¹⁴For a discussion of the Guttman scaling technique see: Louis Guttman, "The Problem of Attitude and Opinion Measurement," "The Basis for Scalogram Analysis," and "Relation of Scalogram Analysis to Other Techniques," in Samuel A. Stouffer, et al., Measurement and Prediction (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950).

Statements which may be arranged into a Guttman scale are said to be unidimensional, thus satisfying the need for an instrument made up of several parts (items) which represent a "common underlying content"--neutralization. See: Allen L. Edwards, op. cit., pp. 173-176; and Harry S. Upshaw, "Attitude Measurement," in Herbert M. Blalock, Jr., and Ann B. Blalock (editors), Methodology in Social Research (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 98-108.

- .861.¹⁵ Guttman maintains that the cutting point for a true scale is .90.¹⁶ While the coefficient of reproducibility of the seven statements did not reach this figure, its nearness should represent a quasi-scale.

Guttman maintains that a quasi-scale is recognized by the gradient pattern of the errors, to which the seven statements conform. Suchman maintains that prediction of external variables in the Guttman quasi-scale rests on the single dominant factor of the scale:

¹⁵ It is known to be true in matters of sampling, the greater the number of items, the greater the confidence that a universe of attributes is scaleable. It is particularly unsettling to this author that Guttman has found that the coefficient of reproducibility computed for small numbers of items known to be statistically independent is very high. This suggests that scale construction under the Guttman model should be restricted to large numbers of items. While this problem is recognized by this author and should be recognized by the reader as well, it was decided to utilize the Guttman scaling technique because the weakness suggested here appears stronger than the method first suggested. Secondly, when respondents were dichotomized (see footnote 18) using the Guttman scale types, as opposed to the alternative plan using weighted scores, the division represented a change in categories for only eight respondents. See: Louis Guttman, "Problems of Reliability," in S. A. Stouffer, et al., Measurement and Prediction (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950), pp. 277-311; and Upshaw, op. cit., pp. 98-108.

¹⁶ There appears some question over the cutting point between a "true" scale and a "quasi-scale." Edwards states: "When the patterns of response fail to indicate substantial frequencies for non-scale types, but the coefficient of reproducibility is less than .85, the set of statements is said . . . to constitute a quasi-scale." The question will not be pressed here, however, for the seven statements we are considering here may be considered a quasi-scale. See: Edwards, op. cit., p. 197. Also see: Louis Guttman, "The Basis for Scalogram Analysis," op. cit., p. 77.

Some areas which are not scalable in terms of reproducibility are called quasi-scales; their reproducibility may not be high but their errors occur in a sort of gradient. This gradient pattern of errors indicates that, while there is not a single factor operating as in the case of a scale, nevertheless there is a single dominant factor and indefinitely many small random factors, so that prediction of any external variable must rest essentially on the dominant factor.¹⁷

The possible scale types for seven statements using the Guttman technique is eight; thus, the decision was made to divide the respondents according to scale type. Those respondents in scale types one through four were designated as most neutralizing (collectively, they will be referred to as "the neutralizers" through the remainder of the paper), and those in scale types five through eight were designated as least neutralizing (collectively, "the non-neutralizers").¹⁸ Of the 164 respondents that were coded, 49 were designated as neutralizers and 115 as non-neutralizers.

¹⁷ Edward A. Suchman, "Utility of Scalogram Analysis," in Stouffer, et al., op. cit., p. 159.

¹⁸ The decision to dichotomize the neutralization variable was not made without a great deal of hesitation. Surely, the collapsing of these units weakens the sensitivity of the instrument. The decision was based on the knowledge that if all eight units were used against other variables many cells would be empty, thus affecting the statistical tests to be employed. Secondly, the use of rank correlation coefficients such as Spearman's or Kendall's assumes ordinal data--an assumption which is not met by all the data.

The decision to dichotomize the neutralization variable does not suggest that the level of measurement is now nominal. Siegel maintains that: " . . . for some nonparametric techniques which require ordinal measurement, the requirement is that there be a continuum underlying the observed scores." While the actual scores we observe may fall into discrete categories (neutralizers and non-neutralizers), we may assume that underlying such a dichotomy there is a continuum of possible scale types. Siegel, op. cit., p. 25.

The Guttman Scale technique also orders the items (statements) in terms of difficulty. Difficulty meaning, statements that were responded to in a neutralizing manner least, i.e., those statements that were the most difficult to neutralize. The statements in order of decreasing difficulty were:

1. I have no one to blame but myself for being sent to the B.I.S. (Assessment of Responsibility for Delinquent Behavior)
2. I deserved to be sent to the B.I.S. (Assessment of Responsibility for Delinquent Behavior)
3. Unfair teachers are to blame for my being sent to the B.I.S. (Condemnation of the Condemners)
4. The judge and the court were against me from the start. (Condemnation of the Condemners)
5. I got into trouble because I couldn't run out on my friends. (The Appeal to Higher Loyalties)
6. If anyone was hurt by what I did, they either deserved it or could afford it. (Denial of the Victim)
7. I got into trouble because I got in with the wrong boys. (Denial of Responsibility)

It is worth noting the order of difficulty of the statements.

The two statements representing a specific confrontation with the realities of incarceration were the most difficult. That is, if these two statements were given a neutralizing response, the other five statements were most likely responded to in the same way. The second two statements in order of difficulty, were the two concerning condemnation of the condemners. As one might have expected, the Denial of Responsibility proved to be the easiest statement to agree with. However, what is surprising is that the Denial of Responsibility in terms of the statement used, represented a condemnation of

reference and peer group. This is even more surprising when it is noted that the Appeal to Higher Loyalties, which centered around a defense of reference groups, was a more difficult statement to agree with. Martha Baum and Stanton Wheeler found that delinquents who believed others were responsible for their troubles were much more likely to mention other youths than anyone else.¹⁹ They have suggested that the results they found do not reflect a true picture of delinquent neutralization. They suggest:

When youthful offenders are in interaction with one another and when they are describing their delinquent activity or their fate at the hands of officials to other offenders, they give little credence to the dominant thrust of the data presented above.²⁰

Baum and Wheeler maintain that the responses they elicited resulted from the fact that the principal interviewer was a mature woman and that a different set of responses than the ones found could be inferred by listening to street-corner talk.

Two problems seem to appear in this explanation. First, in the case of this author's data, the questionnaires were administered by a 23-year-old male. Consequently, we would first argue that differences in the sex and age of the interviewer does not change the response pattern.

Secondly, we must argue that a condemnation or blaming of peers for one's problems would not be detected in street-corner talk. We

¹⁹Martha Baum and Stanton Wheeler, "Becoming An Inmate," in Stanton Wheeler (editor), Controlling Delinquents (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), pp. 172-173.

²⁰Ibid., p. 173.

could hardly expect an attack on one's peers in such a setting. However, this does not mean that this response is not used by delinquents as a technique of neutralization. We suggest that blaming one's peer group for one's troubles is a private rather than public technique and one would seldom, if ever, hear this technique expressed in a peer group setting for obvious reasons.

It is also noteworthy that while the respondents gave neutralizing responses to statements of a specific nature (items 3-7), they did not respond in the same manner to the two statements regarding the blame for and justice in their institutionalization. Thus, while the delinquents appear to exhibit neutralization, it also seems that neutralization does not absolve total responsibility for behavior. On this point, Baum and Wheeler found that 54 percent of the delinquents they interviewed believed that their commitment to an institution was fair and only 18 percent felt it was unfair. The remainder were distributed between these two poles.²¹ This would be consistent with Matza and Sykes in the assertion:

Techniques of neutralization may not be powerful enough to fully shield the individual from the force of his own internalized values and the reactions of conforming others, for as we have pointed out, juvenile delinquents often appear to suffer from feelings of guilt and shame when called into account for their deviant behavior.²² (underline added)

²¹Ibid., pp. 170-172.

²²Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," American Sociological Review, XXII (December, 1957), 669.

Lastly, it should be noted that those persons who gave neutralizing responses to the two statements in question (1 and 2 above) were also the boys who responded in like manner to the other five statements. This would seem to indicate the compounding effect of neutralization. In other words, the more neutralizations one can achieve, the greater the freedom to engage in delinquent behavior and the less guilt or personal responsibility one is likely to feel.

The two statements (from the original set of 9) which were dropped ("The trouble was an accident, which I could not help," and "What I did was not so bad, no one was really hurt.") represent interesting cases. They, of course, represented the two statements with the largest number of inconsistent responses, hence, the greatest number of errors. The first statement--alleging an accident--may have been too specific. That is, while some delinquents may have used this idea for neutralization, given their specific needs and behavior, others may at the same time declare that the trouble was indeed not an accident, but a controlled activity. This would not be inconsistent considering the other alternatives for neutralization, i.e., the Appeal to Higher Loyalties or the Condemnation of the Condemners.

The second statement, involving Denial of Injury, may be considered in the same way. Someone may indeed have been hurt, but that injury may be neutralized in other ways.

It is now appropriate to raise a key methodological issue. It may be argued that while the statements taken as a whole (a scale) or separately are referred to as neutralizations in this study, they are, in fact, verbal expression after-the-fact, i.e., "alibis,"

"rationalizations," "excuses," etc. This may be and most likely is true. How then can the concept of neutralization be measured? Redl and Wineman in their book, Children Who Hate, make special note of these "alibi tricks." However, they prefer to call them "tax evasions."²³ They list some twelve techniques of tax evasions which they have observed. These twelve tax evasions correspond very closely to Matza and Sykes' techniques of neutralization. However, the tax evasions were compiled from "alibis," "rationalizations" and "excuses" given by delinquents for their behavior. Significantly, Redl and Wineman discovered that rehabilitation could not be accomplished until the tax evasions were effectively denied the delinquent. Redl and Wineman add new insight to the Matza and Sykes formulation in that they maintain that what appears to be "after-the-fact" excuses are really something more.

Two items need to be stressed to avoid a misunderstanding of what we have tried to point out in this whole section on the strategy of tax evasion. One is, again, the importance of differentiating between the mechanisms described here and a use of such 'arguments' in order to fool authority figures or a semi-legalistic device to soften the punitive implication of a misdeed for which one has been caught. . . . What we have in mind in this section on tax evasion is an actual attempt of the ego to ward off inner conflict between the children's own conscience and what they do. That is, their ego uses these devices to make delinquent behavior possible and to keep it guilt free, not to ward off outside consequences.²⁴ (double underlining added)

²³ The term "alibi tricks" refers to a technique used by delinquents in order to "talk themselves out of it" when grilled about their delinquent behavior. "The strategy of Tax Evasion" closely corresponds to techniques of neutralization as discussed by Matza and Sykes. See: Fritz Redl and David Wineman, Children Who Hate (New York: The Free Press, 1951), Chapter 4.

²⁴Ibid., p. 183.

Thus, the decision to use the seven statements described earlier, was based upon the rationale and findings of Redl and Wineman. The author sees no reason to believe that the responses to the statements were not important to the delinquent in the commission of delinquent acts. It might also be noted that the delinquents were not asked to indicate a simple yes-no, agree-disagree response to the statements. The response category comprised five alternatives and while the responses indicated direction, only those two responses that indicated the strongest trend toward neutralization were coded as such.

Perception of Behavioral Norms²⁵

Matza maintains that each member of a delinquent group believes that the other members are committed to their delinquencies, but he is not.²⁶ Cloward and Ohlin, on the other hand, suggest that the delinquent is indeed committed to his actions.²⁷ This study proposed to measure the cognitive perception of the behavioral norms of peers as they apply to specific situations.

Attachment to the Normative Behavioral Structure

Matza and Sykes, as well as Cohen and Short, maintain that the delinquent is privately committed to middle-class behavioral norms

²⁵The indicators or operational definitions for (1) perception of behavioral norms, (2) conformity with the normative behavioral structure, (3) moral norms, (4) delinquent and criminal affiliation, and (5) the situation of company will be shown in Chapters III and IV as they are considered.

²⁶David Matza, Delinquency and Drift (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), pp. 50-59.

²⁷Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity (New York: The Free Press, 1960), pp. 19-20.

while at the same time behavior indicates a contradictory value system. The degree of attachment to specific situational norms is measured in this study.

Moral Norms

Matza and Sykes also suggest that the delinquent recognizes both the legitimacy of the dominant social order and its moral rightness. Cloward and Ohlin, in contrast, suggest that the delinquent defines delinquency as legitimate under his special circumstances. The degree of moral commitment to specific situational norms is also determined in this study.

Delinquent and Criminal Affiliation

Sutherland suggests that criminal behavior is learned through interaction with the carriers of criminal norms and values just as non-criminal behavior is learned through interaction with the carriers of the conventional social order.²⁸ Matza and Sykes maintain that in this context, attitudes (neutralization techniques) are an important part of what is learned in the delinquent milieu.²⁹ Following this lead, several variables are measured to determine the degree of criminal and delinquent affiliations among the respondents. These variables include: (1) the number of delinquent peers known, (2) the number of adult criminals known, (3) intimacy with delinquent peers, and (4) intimacy with adult criminals.

²⁸Edwin H. Sutherland and Donald R. Crescey, Principles of Criminology, 7th ed. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966), pp. 77-83.

²⁹Sykes and Matza, op. cit., p. 664.

The Situation of Company

Matza maintains that in the situation of company, that is, within the delinquent group where delinquencies are known, planned and carried out, the delinquent is lead to believe that he receives support from all others within the group for his delinquent behavior. Perception of support is measured in two ways in this study. First, the number of friends who knew about the respondent's delinquent behavior is determined. Second, the amount of active and/or moral support that the respondent perceives from his friends for his delinquent behavior is determined.

Social Class

A measure of socio-economic class was attempted from each respondent's description of his father's occupation. Plans called for the use of the Classified Index of Occupations and Industries published by the Bureau of the Census as a guide for placing persons in one of six groups: (1) professional and semi-professional, (2) proprietors, managers, and officials, (3) clerical, sales and kindred workers, (4) craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers, (5) operatives and kindred workers, and (6) farm laborers, service workers, and laborers. However, due to a lack of cooperation by the respondents in revealing their father's occupation and to the high amount of either divorced and/or separated parents (56 percent), no adequate measure of socio-economic class could be made. For a fuller discussion of the non-response problem of open-ended questions, see the section on open-ended questions in this chapter.

Race

Respondents were asked to indicate race as either Negro or White. Unanticipated, however, there were two American Indians and five respondents of Mexican-American ancestry in the sample. These two additional groups were coded separately. However, after consideration of the needs of the study and the small number of respondents involved in these two categories, it was decided to include them with the Negro respondents under the general designation of a minority group.³⁰ Thus, race included two categories: (1) Whites, which made up 67.1 percent of the sample and minority group members (Negroes 28.7 percent, Indians 1.2 percent, and Mexican-Americans 3.0 percent) which made up 32.9 percent of the sample.

³⁰In the 1960 Bureau of the Census, the concept of race is derived from that which is commonly accepted by the general public. It does not, therefore, reflect clear-cut definitions of biological stock and some categories refer to national origins. The following is the classificatory system of the U. S. Bureau of the Census: "White, Negro, American Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian, Part Hawaiian, Aleut, Eskimo, etc." A second classificatory system used by the census is "White" and "non-white." Important for our discussion, persons of Mexican birth or ancestry, who are not definitely of Indian or other non-white race, are classified as White. See: U. S. Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Population: 1960, Subject Report, Non-white Population by Race, Final Report PC(2)-1C, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1963, pp. X-XI.

The decision to place Mexican-American boys in the minority category with Negroes and American Indians was based on studies which suggest that Mexican-Americans as a group closely correspond to Negroes, American Indians and other debased minority groups in terms of their relationship to majority white society. See: Celia S. Heller, Mexican American Youth: Forgotten Youth at the Crossroads (New York: Random House, 1966), and Alphonse Pinkney, "Prejudice Toward Mexican and Negro Americans: A Comparison," Phylon (First Quarter, 1963), 353-359.

Open-ended Questions

Three open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. The first: "Why do you think you were sent to the B.I.S.?" was designed to allow the respondent to express his attitude in response to the question in one or more of several possible directions. There were two basic types of responses to this question. One response included a simple description of the act or acts that resulted in the boy's referral to the B.I.S. The second type of response was in the form of rationalizations, excuses, alibis and a general denial of guilt or blame.

The responses were to be evaluated along the neutralization dimension; however, many of the respondents (approximately 75 percent) declined to answer all the open-ended questions. While no pressure to reply was exerted, upon questioning and requesting the respondents to answer all the questions, it was found that many claimed that they could think of no answer to the question. This was true of the other open-ended questions as well. Only one respondent expressed fear that his hand-writing would reveal his identity; thus, it is not believed this played an important factor in the high refusal rate.

Redl and Wineman have noted this "blocking" in interview situations. They maintain that the refusal to answer or the inability to answer, which appears to be the case here, is not an attempt by the delinquent to hide from discovery. They suggest that when a delinquent is incapable of producing when challenged in this and similar ways, it may be an indication that the interviewer has hit upon an area in which

real value sensitivity might be intact.³¹ While no data exist to give conclusive evidence regarding the high refusal rate to the open-ended questions, the findings of Redl and Wineman are quite suggestive for this and future studies.

If the Redl and Wineman findings apply to the open-ended questions in our study, we may suggest that the delinquent was faced with an interesting dilemma. First, he could, as a few did, describe the crime or charges leveled against him (N=10). This would have been the simplest solution from the standpoint of neutralization because the respondent would neither accept nor deny responsibility or guilt. A second possibility would be to deny everything (N=3)--total neutralization. This was also done but by only a few of the respondents. A third possibility is to admit guilt and responsibility for one's behavior, which none of the respondents were willing to do. Finally, the last alternative is to escape the dilemma by not answering the question (N=150). Thus, by refusing to answer the question, the respondent is able to escape the dilemma of the realities of his institutionalization.

The second open-ended question followed a question concerning perceived probability of getting into trouble with the police again. The open-ended question was a probe into the response: "Why do you think that?" Here again the response level was so low that no adequate analysis of the responses could be made.

The final open-ended question was designed as a projective technique which would allow the delinquent to express the "reasons"

³¹Redl and Wineman, op. cit., p. 174.

that a boy gets into trouble: "Why do you think a boy gets into trouble with the law?" Responses were to be scored as either blame-accepting or blame-rejecting. That is, the responses were to be judged in regard to whether the respondent blamed someone else (parents, neighborhood, friends) or the social order in general for trouble boys have with the police or whether they placed the blame and responsibility solely with the individual.³² In this case, as with other open-ended questions, the response level was so low it rendered any analysis impractical.

Miscellaneous Background Variables

Background variables include age, family marriage status, place of residence, father's education, church attendance, and number of brothers and sisters. These variables will be used as controls.

Summary

The population for the study consisted of males thirteen to eighteen years of age as of July 3, 1967 who were incarcerated at the Boys Industrial School in Topeka, Kansas. Of the 210 boys that were attending the school during the time that the questionnaires were

³²This is a modified method of the type used by Delbert Elliott. See: Elliott, op. cit., Chapter 6. Elliott in turn created his method out of a similar approach used by Rosenzweig. See: Saul Rosenzweig, "The Experimental Measurement of Types of Reaction to Frustration," H. A. Murry (editor), Explorations in Personality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 585-599, and Saul Rosenzweig, "The Picture Association Method and Its Application in a Study of Reactions to Frustration," Journal of Personality, XIV (1945), 3-23.

administered, 170 boys were questioned. Of this number, six were excluded due to reading difficulties. The respondents were divided into two groups: neutralizers and non-neutralizers. In the following chapter, the neutralizers and non-neutralizers will be compared.

CHAPTER III

REFERENCE GROUP, RACE AND NEUTRALIZATION

Sykes and Matza maintain that while the Sutherland differential association theory hypothesizes that criminal behavior is learned in interaction with criminals or delinquents, the theory does not suggest the content of what is learned. They suggest that what is learned is not necessarily a contradictory or criminal value system as suggested by some theorists, but a set of techniques whereby conventional behavioral norms are rendered inoperative.¹

Delinquent Peer Reference Group

If the Sykes and Matza formulations are correct, we would expect that those delinquents who neutralize the most to be those who also know the greatest number of other delinquents. Additionally, we would expect that neutralizers would perceive greater intimacy with delinquent peers than would non-neutralizers. The idea here being that if neutralization techniques are learned in interaction with other delinquents or with

¹Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," American Sociological Review, XXII (December, 1957), 664.

adult criminals, those who neutralize most will also be those who have had the greatest exposure to other delinquents or adult criminals.²

The number of delinquent boys who were known by the respondent was determined by the question:

How many boys did you know who had been in trouble with the police at one time or another before you came to the BIS?
Don't count traffic violations.³

The intimacy with which the respondents associate with other boys who had been in trouble with the police is an indication of their integration and attachment to the delinquent subculture. The respondents were asked to indicate how well they knew most of the boys who had been in trouble with the police.⁴ Tables 1 and 2 indicate their responses to these questions.

As indicated in Table 1, the statistical relationship between neutralization and number of delinquents known is small and not significant. Thus, it would appear that exposure to other delinquents does not affect neutralization.

Table II indicates that again, a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variable was lacking. Subsequently,

²This idea is closely related to Sutherland's proposition number 7 (see footnote 7, Chapter I). The number of delinquents and adult criminals known corresponds roughly to Sutherland's "frequency" and "duration" and the intimacy with these delinquents and adult criminals resembles Sutherland's description of "intensity," as does the variables included in the situation of company. All these variables are considered in this chapter.

³Traffic violations were excluded because the offense is a minor one and would not, in most cases, lead to a definition of the individual as delinquent. See questionnaire, Part IV, question 1.

⁴See questionnaire, Part IV, question 2.

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF DELINQUENT PEERS KNOWN BY
NEUTRALIZATION^a

Respondents	Number of Delinquent Peers Known						Total
	None	1 or 2	3 to 5	6 to 10	over 10	%	
Neutralizers	10.6	8.5	12.8	17.0	51.1		47
Non-neutralizers	3.6	13.4	14.3	18.8	50.0		112
Total N	9	19	22	29	80		159

Gamma = .01
Chi Square = 3.69
p > .05

^aThe direction of the gammas should be noted throughout this chapter. Due to the fact that neutralizers are listed first and non-neutralizers second, a negative gamma indicates a positive association between the variable neutralization and the other variable while a positive gamma indicates inverse direction.

TABLE 2
INTIMACY WITH KNOWN DELINQUENTS
BY NEUTRALIZATION ^a

Respondents	Intimacy with Known Delinquents					
	None	Just know their names	Speak to them sometimes	Spend time with them	Good friends	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	N
Neutralizers	4.4	11.1	13.3	26.7	44.4	45
Non-neutralizers	0.9	7.9	10.5	29.8	50.9	114
Total N	3	14	18	46	78	159

Gamma = .16

^a In order to conform to the requirements of the chi square test regarding expected frequency of cells, two categories had to be combined. The response indicating "no intimacy" was combined with "just know their names." The chi square resulting from such a combination was 1.99. See: Sidney Siegel, Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), p. 178.

we must reject both of our initial hypotheses. While neutralization may be important in the commission of delinquent acts (a general question we are seeking to answer), neutralizations are not related to the number of delinquents known or the perceived intimacy with known delinquent peers.

Criminal Adult Reference Group

While there was found to be no relationship between neutralization and delinquent peer reference group, it should be recognized that delinquent peers are not the only possible group from which neutralization techniques may be learned. Delinquent boys may, as Cloward and Ohlin suggest, identify with an adult criminal subculture.⁵ Thus, we might suspect that it is from adult criminals that neutralization techniques are learned. In order to examine this possibility, similar questions were asked relative to the number of adults known who had been in jail or prison and how well they knew these adults.⁶ Tables 3 and 4 present the findings on these questions.

As indicated in Table 3, there was found to be no significant statistical relationship between neutralization and the number of adult criminals known. These findings seem to uphold the findings indicated in Table 1, i.e., there is no relationship between neutralization and the number of delinquent peers known.

⁵Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity (New York: The Free Press, 1960), Chapter 7.

⁶See questionnaire, Part IV, question 3 and 4, and 5.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF ADULT CRIMINALS KNOWN BY
NEUTRALIZATION

Respondents	Number of Adult Criminals Known					Total
	None	1 or 2	3 to 5	over 5	N	
Neutralizers	19.1	40.4	12.8	27.7	47	
Non-neutralizers	19.3	37.7	17.5	25.4	114	
Total N	31	62	26	42	161	

Gamma = .005
Chi Square = .27
p > .05

TABLE 4
INTIMACY WITH KNOWN ADULT CRIMINALS
BY NEUTRALIZATION

Respondents	Intimacy with Adult Criminals				Total
	None	Just know their names	Speak to them sometimes	Spend time with them	
	%	%	%	%	N
Neutralizers	10.9	10.9	19.6	19.6	46
Non-neutralizers	15.8	19.3	17.5	16.7	114
Total N	23	27	29	28	160

Gamma = $-.18$
Chi Square = 2.86
p > .05

The information indicated in Table 4 corresponds to the similar findings indicated in Tables 1-3. That is, there is no significant statistical relationship between neutralization and the degree of intimacy with known adult criminals. Thus, from the findings presented in the above tables, we must suggest that neutralizations, while learned from some source (as is all social behavior), do not appear to be learned from or be related to the number of or intimacy with delinquents or adult criminals.

At this point, we should consider the formulations of Matza and Sykes in relation to the findings shown in the tables above. Matza and Sykes in an article entitled "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values" suggest that neutralization techniques may be learned from sources other than a criminal or delinquent reference group. They maintain that the delinquent may learn neutralization techniques and indeed have them reinforced by the conventional value system.

In short, we are arguing that the delinquent may not stand as an alien in the body of society, but may represent instead a disturbing reflection or a caricature The delinquent has picked up and emphasized one part of the dominant value system, namely, the subterranean values that co-exist with other, publicly proclaimed values possessing a more respectable air.⁷

Given this formulation, we may well have expected the results presented in the above tables.

A second earlier finding may also have forewarned of the results revealed in the above four tables. In Chapter II, the order of the neutralization statements was discussed. Here again, it should be noted

⁷David Matza and Gresham M. Sykes, "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values," American Sociological Review, XXVI (November, 1961), 717.

that the statement that proved the easiest neutralization was the one regarding the rejection of the delinquent peer group. Thus, it appears that for the neutralizers and non-neutralizers alike, there was little hesitation in rejecting one's delinquent peers.⁸

The Situation of Company:
Perception of Peer Support for Delinquent Behavior

Matza maintains that in the situation of company the delinquent's deviant behavior is planned and carried out. He suggests that in this situation of company the delinquent is lead to believe that he receives support, both moral and active, for his behavior. Coupled with this perception of support is a set of shared misunderstandings. That is, the delinquent believes that others are committed to the deviant behavior being planned, but he, himself, is not. Thus, the support perceived by the delinquent from his peers leads him into delinquent behavior while at the same time the delinquent believes himself the only boy not committed to this behavior.⁹

The question of perception of peer norms will be considered in Chapter IV. Here we wish to consider the problem of perceived support. First, we must ask the question: How much support is perceived by the delinquents in our sample. And second, is there a difference between the perception of support of neutralizers and non-neutralizers.

⁸See Chapter II for implications and discussion of this finding in relation to neutralization.

⁹David Matza, Delinquency and Drift (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), pp. 50-59.

In answer to the first question, we may expect the support for delinquent behavior to be high. To the second question, we would expect neutralizers to perceive greater support for delinquent behavior than non-neutralizers. This is especially true given the fact that the neutralizers blamed their friends for being sent to the B.I.S.

Perception of support is measured in two ways. First, the number of peers who knew about their delinquent behavior before it was carried out was determined. Secondly, the respondent's perception of moral and/or active support for deviant behavior was determined.

TABLE 5
PERCENT WHO KNEW ABOUT DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR
BEFORE IT WAS CARRIED OUT. (ALL RESPONDENTS)

	None	1 or 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	over 10	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Respondents	10.0	27.5	19.4	15.0	28.1	100.0 (160)

Table 5 shows that 43.1 percent of the respondents maintained that at least six or more peers knew about their behavior before it was carried out. This would seem to indicate a high degree of gang membership among the respondents. This is not surprising in view of the fact that other researchers have noted similar findings. Shaw and McKay, for example, in a Chicago study found that 19 percent of all offenders were isolated, 75 percent in groups of 2, 3, 4, or 5, and only 6 percent of the offenses were

carried out by six or more boys.¹⁰ While the number involved in the offense was not asked of respondents, the number who knew of plans for the offense before it occurred was asked. The findings here suggest the conclusions of Cavan; that is, while the group committing the offense may be small, many boys belong to larger groups who give support for the delinquent behavior.¹¹

Table 6 indicates that it was found that there was no significant statistical relationship between the perception of support in terms of the number of boys who knew of the plans for an offense before it occurred and neutralization. In fact, the results were in the opposite direction to that expected. That is, the neutralizers tended to be those who perceived less support in terms of the number who knew.

Table 7 reveals little difference between neutralizers and non-neutralizers and no significant statistical relationship between neutralization and support for delinquent behavior. While neutralizers perceived less support in terms of numbers, they tended to perceive more active (were in on it) and more moral support (all right, not in on it) than the non-neutralizers.

An effort was made to examine the possible reasons for the lack of relationship between neutralization and the variables thus far discussed

¹⁰Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay, Social Factors in Juvenile Delinquency, National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, No. 13, Vol. 2, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1931, pp. 194-195, and William C. Kvaraceus, Juvenile Delinquency and the School, (World Book Co., Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: 1945), p. 16.

¹¹Ruth S. Cavan, Juvenile Delinquency (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1962), pp. 9-10.

TABLE 6
NUMBER WHO KNEW ABOUT DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR
BEFORE IT WAS CARRIED OUT BY NEUTRALIZATION

Respondents	None		Number Who Knew About Delinquent Behavior		6 to 10		over 10		Total	N
		%	1 or 2	%	3 - 5	%	6 to 10	%		
Neutralizers	10.6		38.3		14.9		8.5		27.7	47
Non-neutralizers	9.7		23.0		21.2		17.7		28.3	113
Total N	16		44		31		24		45	160

Gamma = .14
Chi Square = 5.41
p > .05

TABLE 7
ACTIVE AND/OR MORAL SUPPORT FOR
DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR BY NEUTRALIZATION

Respondents	None	They didn't like it		Didn't care		All right, not in on it		Were in on it		Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Neutralizers	4.3		17.0	21.3		19.1		38.3		47
Non-neutralizers	7.1		22.3	24.1		17.0		29.5		112
Total N	10		33	37		28		51		159

Gamma = -.17
Chi Square = 1.89
p > .05

in this chapter. Several variables were controlled and the relationships just discussed were examined again. However, it was discovered that the use of such controls as age, family marital status, father's education, church attendance, number of brothers or sisters, and place of residence, resulted in no change in the relationships as described above.

Race

Race has proven to be the most interesting variable in this chapter. When this research was first planned, it was believed that the number of minority group members in the sample would be too small to permit adequate comparisons between minority and majority group members; thus, no plans were made to include race as a significant variable. However, as indicated in Chapter II, this was not the case.

As indicated in Table 8, 51 percent of the neutralizers belong to minority groups and 46.3 percent of the minority group were neutralizers. Thus, we must ask the question, what is it about the position of minority status that makes neutralization more prevalent?

Because Negroes make up the largest portion of the category "minority group," our discussion will center on them, but may be expanded to include other debased minority groups as well. The Negro's special position in the social structure should be noted. Drake and Cayton have found that Negroes are the last hired and the first fired in the occupational structure and others have also made similar findings.¹² Spergel found that while Negro youngsters, both deviants and conformists, had

¹²St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Black Metropolis, Vol. I (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), Chapter 9; Ray Marshall, The Negro Worker (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 148-159; Arthur M. Ross and

TABLE 8
RACE BY NEUTRALIZATION^a

Respondent	White	Minority	Total
	%	%	N
Neutralizers	49.0 (21.8)	51.0 (46.3)	49
Non-neutralizers	74.8 (78.2)	25.2 (53.7)	115
Total N	(110)	(54)	164

Corrected chi square = 9.22

$p < .05$

Yule's $Q = .51$

^aYule's Q or coefficient of association is designed to reflect the degree of association between a pair of qualitative variables arranged in a fourfold table. This statistic gives values ranging from -1 to +1 and is most useful when marginal sets are dissimilar. See: John H. Mueller and Karl F. Schussler, Statistical Reasoning in Sociology (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), pp. 238-252.

high aspirations and expectations for achievement of middle-class occupational status,¹³ he also discovered that expectations for achieving success were generally greater for conformists than for deviant youngsters. In other words, deviant Negro youngsters appeared to be less optimistic in regard to educational and occupational goal achievement by middle-class standards. He suggests that his findings on aspirations and expectations of Negro youngsters supports the anomie propositions of Merton and Cloward and Ohlin.

Crime rates also exemplify the Negro's special position in the social structure. A number of studies in the United States have shown that Negroes are more likely to be arrested, indicted and convicted than are Whites who commit the same offenses and similarly less likely to receive probation, suspended sentences, parole or pardon.¹⁴

Herbert Hill, Employment, Race and Poverty (New York: Harcourt, Brace World, 1967), pp. 62-71.

The Governor's Commission on Civil Disorder for the state of New Jersey reports that when Negroes were presented 15 possible underlying causes for the 1967 disorders, 53 per cent suggested that unemployment was a cause and the second cause most often mentioned was lack of equal job opportunities (52 per cent). See Report for Action, Governor's Select Commission on Civil Disorders, State of New Jersey, February, 1968, p. 55.

¹³ Irving Spergel, "Deviant Patterns and Opportunities of Pre-Adolescent Negro Boys in Three Chicago Neighborhoods," in Malcolm W. Klein (editor), Juvenile Gangs in Context (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 46-49.

¹⁴ See: Thorsten Sellin, "Race Prejudice in the Administration of Justice," American Journal of Sociology, XLI (September, 1935), 212-217; Earl R. Moses, "Differentials in Crime Rates Between Negroes and Whites," American Sociological Review, XII (August, 1947), 411-420; and Sidney Axelrad, "Negro and White Male Institutionalized Delinquents," American Journal of Sociology, XVII (May, 1952), 569-574.

Kenneth Clark maintains that under these conditions and the factors of general social injustice, the Negro personality suffers greatly. He maintains:

Since every human being depends upon his cumulative experiences with others for clues as to how he should view and value himself, children who are consistently rejected understandably begin to question and doubt whether they, their family, and their group really deserve no more respect from the larger society than they receive. These doubts become the seeds of a pernicious self- and group-hatred, the Negro's complex and debilitating prejudice against himself.¹⁵

Two things appear evident, irrespective of how one explains Negro deviant behavior. Negro's aspire to White middle-class occupational and educational goals and for the most part are effectively blocked from achieving them. Secondly, Negroes who aspire to goals beyond their reach must find some way to explain their failure which will not be an affront to an already damaged self-image.

We have already noted that Clark and Spergel found that Negroes do not reject the success goals of the White middle-class society. Indeed, if Negroes aspire to full membership within the White middle-class, we would not expect them to reject those norms which accompany membership in the middle-class. In this context, we would expect the Negro delinquent to be under great pressure to rationalize behavior patterns which are violations of middle-class norms--we would expect the Negro delinquent to neutralize norms and values to which he has given allegiance in anticipation of middle-class status.¹⁶

¹⁵Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 64.

¹⁶Unfortunately, this problem was not anticipated and no provisions in the research were made to investigate the question of Negro identification with the middle-class.

It should be pointed out that while it is maintained that the Negro does not reject the White middle-class values, he may and does reject the White's system of racial social injustice. This, in fact, we would expect to be an important neutralization technique. This type of rejection is seen in the statement of Aaron Mitchell, who was a Negro and the first person to be executed in California since 1963. Mitchell declared when his final appeal was rejected that just being born a Negro put "two strikes against me."¹⁷

Minority Group Neutralization

The fact that 51 percent of the neutralizers in the sample are Negroes presents several questions. First, do Negroes neutralize in the same way as Whites. Secondly, do Negro neutralizers represent a special group of neutralizers due to their special situation in the social structure.

In order to answer the first question, the minority members in the sample were considered separately from the Whites in terms of the neutralization items. Answers to the neutralization questions for the minority group and the White group were scaled separately using the Guttman scaling technique. Two things were of interest in scaling the responses of the two groups separately. First, does the coefficient of the reproducibility change to any great degree for either group. Secondly, does the order of the items (statements) change and how does the order change if it does.

¹⁷The Wichita Eagle, "Effort to Cheat Gas Chamber Vain," (Wednesday, April 12, 1967), pp. 1 and 6A.

The coefficient of reproducibility for the White group was found to be .869 which was a slight improvement over the coefficient of reproducibility for the groups taken together (.861). The coefficient of reproducibility for the minority group was found to be .841. This represents a slight decline in reproducibility. However, both still conformed to the requirements of a quasi-scale.

Next the order of the items in terms of degree of difficulty was considered. The order of items for the White group and the minority group was slightly different from that of the two groups taken as a whole, and also differed slightly from each other.

TABLE 9
ORDER OF ITEMS BY DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY
FOR MINORITY GROUP, WHITE GROUP, AND TOTAL SAMPLE

Item order for both groups (total sample)	White group	Minority group
1.* I have no one to blame but myself for being sent to the B.I.S.	1	2
2. I deserved to be sent to the B.I.S.	2	1
3. Unfair teachers are to blame for my being sent to the B.I.S.	3	4
4. The judge and the court were against me from the start.	4	5
5. I got into trouble because I couldn't run out on my friends.	6	3
6. If anyone was hurt by what I did, they either deserved it or could afford it.	5	6
7.** I got into trouble because I got in with the wrong boys.	7	7

* 1 = most difficult

** 7 = least difficult

Table 9 shows the order of the items for the total sample and for the minority group and White group when separated. A Spearman rank correlation coefficient was computed for the order of the items of the White and minority group.¹⁸ The correlation coefficient was found to be .75 ($p < .05$).¹⁹ Thus, while there was found to be differences in the order of the items between the White group and the minority group, the differences were not great enough to accept the hypothesis of no association between the two groups order of items.

In answer to the first question posed, it is concluded that Negroes perceive the neutralization items in the same manner as Whites. It might also be concluded that because the answer to the first question posed was "yes," the answer to the second question posed (Do Negro neutralizers represent a special group of neutralizers due to their special situation in the social structure?) might be "no." However, to confirm the proposed answer to the above question, an additional test was made.

Race as a Control

Here it should be noted that the greatest difference in terms of the order of the items by the Negroes and the Whites was 3. That

¹⁸The Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (sometimes called rho or r_s) is a measure of association between two variables. The statistic requires that both variables be measured on at least an ordinal scale. The statistic is symmetric, thus it varies in value between -1 and +1. For other discussions of the Spearman rank-order correlation see: Siegel, op. cit., pp. 202-212; John H. Mueller and Karl F. Schuessler, Statistical Reasoning in Sociology (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), pp. 270-280.

¹⁹The probability of $r_s = .75$ with an "N" of seven is .05 for a one-tail test. The one-tail test is used here because we are predicting that the two groups of items are positively related. See Siegel, op. cit., p. 284, Table P.

item was the neutralization statement regarding an appeal to higher loyalties and represented an attachment to reference group. If this relationship holds true throughout, we might expect that by controlling race, the relationship hypothesized between neutralization and the general variables of reference group, at least for Whites, would be found.

Cloward and Ohlin also note this possibility in terms of an adult criminal reference group. That is, they maintain that in large cities Negro delinquents are largely conflict oriented. They suggest that the reason for this is the fact that the political and rackets structure within the Negro community is dominated by Whites from outside the Negro community. This leaves the Negro delinquent with few adult criminal role models for identification and emulation.²⁰ Thus, given this fact coupled with the change found in the ordering of the items, each of the variables discussed in this chapter was considered again with race controlled.

With race controlled, it was found that the relationship between neutralization and the variables of number of delinquent peers known, intimacy with delinquent peers, number of adult criminals known, intimacy with adult criminals, number who knew about delinquencies, and perception of support, remained the same--no relationship. Thus, it is concluded that Negroes do not represent a special group of neutralizers due to their special situation in the social structure.

Summary and Conclusions

Schwendinger and Schwendinger, in a recent study of some of the Matza and Sykes propositions, suggest that delinquents learn to view

²⁰Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., pp. 199-202.

probable victims in stereotypes which conceptualizes the individual as a legitimate object of victimization. Their findings lead them to suggest that:

These items (stereotypes) do not emerge in isolation from others, but rather through social processes in which peers are persuaded by prestigious members to engage in deviant activity.²¹ (words in parentheses added)

While the approach to neutralization in this thesis is different from the one cited above, it was not found here that the use of neutralizations was related to attachment or integration in delinquent or criminal reference groups nor was it found to be related to perception of support from delinquent peer groups.

These findings seem to support the suggestion of Matza and Sykes that neutralizations are furnished and supported in their use by the conventional value system.

The minority group in the sample present a noteworthy case. Their position in the social structure coupled with their over-representation in the neutralizer group suggests several things about neutralizers in general which might not have been noted otherwise. First, neutralizers generally and minority group neutralizers specifically, seem to use neutralizations as explanations of failure or anticipated failure. Spergel, as cited earlier, found that Negro deviants had lower expectations for achieving success than Negro conformists.²² Cloward and Ohlin also suggest this function of neutralization; however, they maintain that failure often results in alienation from the social system:

²¹Herman Schwendinger and Julia Schwendinger, "Delinquent Stereotypes of Probable Victims," in Klein, op. cit., p. 98.

²²Spergel, op. cit., pp. 46-49.

A common source of alienation from the dominant norms of a social group is failure, or the anticipation of failure, in achieving success-goals by socially approved means. It is our view that the most significant step in the withdrawal of sentiments supporting the legitimacy of conventional norms is attribution of the cause of failure to the social order rather than to oneself²³

Matza and Sykes deny that delinquents withdraw support for conventional norms; they suggest:

Rather than standing in opposition to conventional ideas of good conduct, the delinquent is likely to adhere to the dominant norms in belief but render them ineffective in practice by holding various attitudes and perceptions which serve to neutralize the norms as checks on behavior.²⁴

If Cloward and Ohlin are correct, we would expect Negro deviants to represent one polar type of neutralization in terms of denial of responsibility for failure and White non-neutralizers to represent the other pole.

Negro neutralizers tend to blame other people for their failure while White neutralizers and Negro non-neutralizers are almost evenly divided. The White non-neutralizers on the other hand, do not blame other people for their failure.

These findings seem consistent with the formulations we made above and suggest one function of neutralization is to free the individual from the personal responsibility of his behavior. For the Negro, as well as all debased minority groups in the United States, we would expect neutralization to be highly functional. That is, failure in the political,

²³Cloward and Ohlin, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

²⁴Matza and Sykes, op. cit., pp. 712-713.

TABLE 10

AGREEMENT BY NEUTRALIZATION AND RACE

STATEMENT:		I would have been more successful if people had given me a fair chance. ^a	
Respondent	Agree	Disagree	Total
	%	%	N
Negro neutralizer	64.0	36.0	25
White neutralizer	45.8	54.2	24
Negro non-neutralizer	51.7	48.3	29
White non-neutralizer	33.7	66.3	86

Chi square = 8.49
p < .05

^aThis statement comes from a series of questions contained in Part II of the questionnaire. It was considered separately because it most specifically deals with the problem under consideration--assessment of responsibility for failure. Zetterberg has suggested: "... it is well worth remembering that one single valid indicator is worth more than an index made up of numerous indicators of low validity." He also suggests that "the validity of our indicators can be judged only in the context of success of a theory." See: Hans L. Zetterberg, *On Theory and Verification in Sociology*, third enlarged edition (Totowa, New Jersey: The Bedminster Press, 1965), p. 118.

Part II of the questionnaire was intended to be used as a self-concept scale; however, it was decided not to include a consideration of self-concept because it was felt that its consideration would have distracted from the main themes of this thesis and did not appear to be a meaningful variable for this study.

economic and social spheres of American life need not be due to one's personal faults. Indeed, without the use of this technique, we might well expect to find even more self-hatred as Clark suggests.

For the delinquent, the denial of personal responsibility is often so important that those working in rehabilitation have found it very difficult to accomplish any meaningful change without first breaking through this technique. Redl and Wineman, as pointed out earlier, found that treatment of delinquents who make use of this technique is extremely difficult. Rehabilitation is accomplished only when the "tax evasions" are effectively denied the delinquent.²⁵

William Glasser has introduced a treatment which he calls reality therapy which is designed to solve the problem of denial of responsibility. He contends that, whereas traditional psychotherapy makes excuses for deviant behavior, reality therapy focuses on the delinquent's present behavior and emphasizes his individual responsibility, thus disregarding past history, unconscious conflicts, and psychiatric diagnosis.²⁶ Glasser suggests:

Therefore, we emphasize what traditional therapy tried to ignore: No matter what happened to him, he still has the responsibility for what he does. If we continue to accept the offender's irresponsibility because of his traumatic history, we become trapped from a therapeutic standpoint Either we must help him to become more responsible or we must lock him up indefinitely.²⁷

²⁵Fritz Redl and David Wineman, Children Who Hate (New York: The Free Press, 1951), Chapter 4.

²⁶William Glasser, "Reality Therapy," Crime and Delinquency, X (April, 1964), 135-144.

²⁷Ibid., p. 137.

CHAPTER IV

BEHAVIORAL NORMS, MORAL NORMS AND ATTACHMENT: PROBLEMS OF DEVIANCE AND CONFORMITY

In this chapter, delinquents will be considered with regard to their cognitive perception of the behavioral norms of peers, their own moral norms and their behavioral attachment to these norms.¹

¹Before proceeding in this chapter, several assumptions regarding the data should be made clear. In Chapter II, we divided the respondents into two groups. Those that ranked high on the neutralization scale were separated from those who ranked low. In so dividing the groups, we have tried to investigate the relationship between neutralization and other variables and to contrast and compare them on the several variables in Chapter III. One implication of this is that neutralizers were treated as if they were total neutralizers and non-neutralizers treated as if they never neutralize. One underlying assumption being that the neutralizers are not committed to their behavior while the non-neutralizers are so committed. At this point, it should be noted that the difference between the two groups is not so much a difference of kind as a difference of intensity. This is particularly revealed by viewing the neutralization scale. The neutralization items were scaled so that differences between respondents were differences on a continuum and not categorical or polar differences.

In this chapter, we will consider the behavioral norms and moral norms of delinquent boys and we shall continue to make the distinction between high and low neutralizers. However, in continuing to make this distinction, it should be pointed out that Matza and Sykes maintain that most, if not all, delinquents neutralize and that only a small percent of all delinquents are committed to their behavior and do not and need not neutralize. In Chapter IV, we shall examine some of the Matza and Sykes propositions regarding the norms and behavior of delinquents along with alternative viewpoints exemplified by Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin and Miller. Thus, while we shall continue to maintain the distinction between neutralizers and non-neutralizers in the tables presented in order to detect trends regarding neutralization and the variables to be considered, we shall also consider the delinquents as a whole regarding moral and behavioral norms for it is in this context that Matza and Sykes constructed their theory.

This chapter consists of two major sections. In the first section, we shall seek to answer three major questions:

1. What are the delinquents' moral norms?
2. What is their perception of peer's behavioral norms?
3. To what norm do they show greatest attachment?

In this chapter, we shall make a distinction between two types of norms: moral norms and behavioral norms, subsequently considering delinquents' behavioral attachment to these norms.² "Moral norms" refer to standards of conduct that are believed to be the "right," "just" or "ideal" forms of behavior. "Behavioral norms," on the other hand, refer to standards of conduct that are deemed the "real patterns," i.e., what the people actually do, irrespective of what they are ideally supposed to do, or what they themselves believe they should do. The distinction between the two norms is one of the ideal vs. the real as perceived by the delinquent. Along with this distinction between the two norms, we will consider the delinquent's behavior attachment to either his moral norms, or his perception of behavioral norms or some third alternative set of norms to be discovered.

The second area of inquiry concerns perception of deviance and conformity. Here, we will consider delinquents' type of perceived deviance from behavioral norms and from their own moral norms.

²Elliott suggested this distinction; however, he did not include the concept of Moral Norms in his research. Delbert S. Elliott, Delinquency, Opportunity and Patterns of Orientation (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Washington, 1961), pp. 87-99.

Behavioral Norms, *Moral Norms*
and Behavioral Attachment

Matza and Sykes, Cloward and Ohlin, and Cohen and Short all suggest some degree of delinquent recognition of the official normative structure. However, Matza and Sykes suggest the greatest degree of attachment to the normative structure. They maintain that a large portion of delinquents are not committed to their misdeeds and remain privately uncommitted in the delinquent group situation; while at the same time, they are publicly a receiver and transmitter of miscues suggesting commitment.³ Cohen claims a strong covert attachment but a low overt attachment due to reaction formations,⁴ while Cloward and Ohlin claim the delinquent has completely withdrawn sentiments of legitimacy from the normative structure.⁵

Following the Matza and Sykes formulations, we would suggest:

1. That behavioral attachment is the same for both neutralizers and non-neutralizers.
2. That the behavioral attachment of all delinquents is markedly deviant.⁶

³David Matza, Delinquency and Drift (New York: John Wiley and Sons) pp. 50-59; David Matza and Gresham M. Sykes, "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values," American Sociological Review, XXVI (November, 1961), 712-719; Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," American Sociological Review, XXVI (December, 1957), 664-670.

⁴Albert K. Cohen and James F. Short, Jr., "Research in Delinquent Subcultures," Journal of Social Issues, XIV (1958), 20-21.

⁵Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity (New York: The Free Press, 1960), pp. 110-11.

⁶While the hypothesis may seem to be stating the obvious--delinquents are defined as deviant--it is necessary for two reasons: first, it sets up a conceptual base so that the remaining hypotheses may be clearly understood. Secondly, the method by which the data on behavioral compliance were collected

3. That neutralizers' moral norms are in greater conformity with the socially approved norm than are non-neutralizers because they are not committed to their delinquent behavior.
4. That delinquents' moral norms show a high degree of conformity to the socially approved norm.
5. That perception of peer's behavioral norms will be the same for both neutralizers and non-neutralizers.
6. That the respondents will perceive peer behavioral norms less in conformity with the socially approved norm than their own behavioral attachment.

The following hypotheses are portrayed below graphically in order that the reader may fully understand their character and direction.

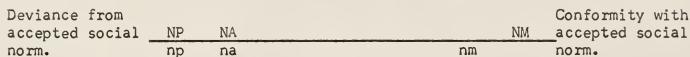


Fig. 3. Graphic portrayal of hypotheses 1-6*

- *Legend: NP--Neutralizers perception of peer behavioral norms.
 np--Non-neutralizers perception of peer behavioral norms.
 NA--Neutralizers behavioral attachment.
 na--Non-neutralizers behavioral attachment.
 NM--Neutralizers moral norms.
 nm--Non-neutralizers moral norms.

requires that such a hypothesis be made, i.e., delinquents were asked to indicate what they would do in problem situations. Thus, their answers could differ significantly from any official definition of the boys as delinquent or deviant.

In the graph, we see that neutralizers moral norms are in closer conformity with the accepted social norm than are non-neutralizers as indicated by the distance on the base line between complete conformity and complete deviance. Neutralizers and non-neutralizers behavioral attachment is the same and is shown to be closer to the accepted social norm than is their perception of peer behavioral norms which is also the same for both groups.

The respondents were presented five problem situations, each situation being designed to portray a realistic problem of adjustment for a teen-aged boy.⁷ One situation dealt with problems of cheating in school, three dealt with problems of stealing, and one with a problem of courtesy in boy-girl relationships. Each problem was given three alternative solutions, one solution being the socially accepted norm, another solution involving only a partial violation of the socially accepted norm, and the third solution representing a clear violation of the socially approved norm. The following is an example of these situations:

You find a billfold on the sidewalk. There is nobody around. Upon examining it, you find that it contains \$15.00 and an identification card. You discover that you know the person who lost the billfold, but he is not one of your good friends.

1. Return the money and the billfold to the owner. (Socially accepted norm)
2. Take the money and send the billfold back to the owner by dropping it in a mailbox. (Compromise or partial violation of the socially accepted norm)

⁷The basic form of the scale was taken from Elliott. See: Delbert S. Elliott, Delinquency, Opportunity and Patterns of Orientations, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Washington, 1961.)

3. Take the money and throw the billfold away. (Complete violation of the socially accepted norm)

Each boy was asked to indicate what he thought most boys his age would do, what he would do, and what he thought he should do. The first answer indicates his perception of peer behavioral norms, the second answer indicates his behavioral attachment and the third answer indicates his moral norms. Figure 4, which includes each of the five problem situations, is presented below in order to facilitate easier reading of the tables that are presented in this chapter. Each of the situations will be referred to by number rather than by name throughout the rest of this chapter.

Situation I - You find a billfold on the sidewalk. There is nobody around. Upon examining it, you find that it contains \$15.00 and an identification card. You discover that you know the person who lost the billfold, but he is not one of your good friends.

Situation II - The teacher has passed exam papers back for you to see. You discover that he has made an error in adding and has given you 10 extra points. These points will mean whether you pass or fail.

Situation III - You walk into the men's restroom at the beach. There is no one else there but you. On the floor, you see an expensive men's watch.

Situation IV - You are buying cokes for all the gang after the ball game. When you put your money into the coke machine, you discover that it will not take your money, but will give you free cokes.

Situation V - You ask a girl you think is real good-looking to go to the school dance with you. She says she would really like to go with you, but she was out too late last week and her parents won't let her go. So, you ask someone else (not nearly so cute). The second girl accepts and all the plans are made. The afternoon before the dance, the girl you asked first calls and tells you that she talked her parents into letting her go after all. You would really rather go with her.

Fig. 4. Description of problem situations⁸

⁸For a listing of the alternative solutions to each problem see questionnaire, Part III.

Perception of Peer Behavioral Norms

The figures in Table 11 indicate that, at least on the basis of statistical evidence, we may accept the null hypothesis that perception of peer's behavioral norms is independent of neutralization.

The small amount of respondents (no more than 30.1% in Situation V) who maintain that peer behavioral norms are in conformity with the socially accepted norm is noteworthy. This suggests that while we cannot know by what standard delinquents perceive peer norms regarding deviance or conformity, we can readily see that their perception of behavioral norms, from society's viewpoint, is clearly deviant. In this regard, we may well expect that the delinquent boy who maintains, as Redl and Wineman suggest, that what he did was not really deviant because everyone else does it, is not so much rationalizing or merely making excuses, but stating a belief grounded in the boy's perception of the behavior of his peers.⁹

Behavioral Attachment of Delinquents

The figures in Table 12 indicate that, on the basis of statistical evidence, the attachment pattern is the same for both neutralizers and non-neutralizers. It is noted, however, that with the exception of Situation II, non-neutralizers were over-represented in the socially acceptable solution and under-represented in the most deviant solution. While no suggestions as to how the neutralizers judge their behavior or

⁹Redl and Wineman note two such techniques: "He did it first," and "Everybody else does such things anyway." Fritz Redl and David Wineman, Children Who Hate (New York: The Free Press, 1951), pp. 174-175.

TABLE 11
PERCEPTION OF BEHAVIORAL NORMS BY NEUTRALIZATION*

	Situation I				Situation II			
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Neutralizers	13.3	11.1	75.6	45	17.4	39.1	43.5	46
Non-neutralizers	15.9	17.7	66.4	113	18.4	36.0	45.6	114
Total	15.2	15.8	69.0	158	18.1	36.9	45.0	158
	Chi square = 1.41 p > .05				Chi square = .14 p > .05			
	Situation III				Situation IV			
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Neutralizers	10.6	14.9	74.5	47	13.0	10.9	76.1	46
Non-neutralizers	17.9	5.4	76.7	112	15.2	15.2	69.6	112
Total	15.7	8.2	76.1	159	14.5	13.9	71.5	158
	Chi square = 4.80 p > .05				Chi square = .72 p > .05			
	Situation V							
	1	2	3	N				
	%	%	%					
Neutralizers	30.4	34.8	34.8	46				
Non-neutralizers	30.0	40.0	30.0	110				
Total	30.1	38.5	31.4	156				
	Chi square = .46 p > .05							

*Solution 1 refers to the solution closest to the socially approved norm, and Solution 3 to the solution most distant or deviant from that norm.

TABLE 12
ATTACHMENT BY NEUTRALIZATION*

	Situation I				Situation II			
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Neutralizers	24.4	17.8	57.8	45	28.3	43.5	28.2	46
Non-neutralizers	39.8	16.8	43.4	113	39.5	27.2	33.3	114
Total	35.4	17.1	47.5	158	36.3	31.9	31.9	160
	Chi square = 3.57 p > .05				Chi square = 4.12 p > .05			
	Situation III				Situation IV			
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Neutralizers	19.1	21.3	59.6	47	17.4	21.7	60.9	46
Non-neutralizers	34.8	11.6	53.6	112	25.9	21.4	52.7	112
Total	30.2	14.5	55.3	159	23.4	21.5	55.1	158
	Chi square = 5.04 p > .05				Chi square = 1.40 p > .05			
	Situation V							
	1	2	3	N				
	%	%	%					
Neutralizers	30.4	36.9	32.7	46				
Non-neutralizers	40.0	40.9	19.1	110				
Total	37.2	39.7	23.1	156				
	Chi square = 3.49 p > .05							

*Solution 1 refers to the solution closest to the socially approved norm, and Solution 3 to the solution most distant or deviant from that norm.

their perception of peer's behavior (behavioral norms) can be made at this point, it appears that in terms of the dominant society, there is a trend suggesting that neutralizers are more deviant than non-neutralizers as shown in Table 12. It also appears that neutralizers perception of peers behavior norms is also more deviant than non-neutralizers. (See Table 11). This is not to say, however, that neutralizers perceive their own behavior and their peer's behavior as deviant--a question which will be considered later in this chapter.

It is not surprising that the attachment of the respondents (both neutralizers and non-neutralizers) was deviant for two reasons. First, the respondents have been defined as delinquent by society, and the boys' solutions to the problems situations reflect the actions which resulted in them being so defined. Secondly, their perception of peer behavioral norms would also suggest that their attachment, insofar as they accept peer behavioral norms as their own, would be deviant.

A comparison of the totals in Tables 11 and 12 (as indicated in Table 13) also reveals that from society's viewpoint, attachment patterns of the delinquent are less deviant than their perception of peer norms. This finding seems to substantiate the suggestion of Matza and Sykes that delinquents perceive themselves less deviant than their delinquent peers; that they perceive their peers committed to their misdeeds while they, themselves, are not so committed.

Table 13 also suggests that delinquent boys perceive their behavior as non-conforming with regard to peer behavioral norms. The direction of this non-conformity, however, will be considered in a later section.

TABLE 13

PERCEPTION OF NORMS BY DELINQUENT ATTACHMENT AND
PERCEPTION OF BEHAVIORAL NORMS OF PEERS*

	Situation I				Situation II			
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Self-perception	35.4	17.1	47.5	158	36.3	31.9	31.9	160
Perception of peers	15.2	15.8	69.0	158	18.1	36.9	45.0	160
	Chi square = 19.16 p < .05				Chi square = 13.83 p < .05			
	Situation III				Situation IV			
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Self-perception	30.2	14.5	55.3	159	23.4	21.5	55.1	158
Perception of peers	15.7	8.2	76.1	159	14.6	13.9	71.5	158
	Chi square = 15.23 p < .05				Chi square = 9.21 p < .05			
	Situation V							
	1	2	3	N				
	%	%	%					
Self-perception	37.2	39.7	23.1	156				
Perception of peers	30.1	38.5	31.4	156				
	Chi square = 3.17 p > .05							

*Solution 1 refers to the solution closest to the socially approved norm, and Solution 3 to the solution most distant or deviant from that norm.

Moral Norms

Table 14 indicates that the hypothesis that neutralizers' moral norms are in greater conformity with the socially approved norm than non-neutralizers was not borne out. In Situation I, the figures suggest a trend in the opposite direction hypothesized. In Situation II-V, however, another feature is noted. While the neutralizers had a smaller proportion in the socially acceptable response category than the non-neutralizers, they had a larger proportion in the second category which represented a compromise between a socially acceptable response and a clearly deviant response. This suggests that some neutralizers show a moral commitment to norms that are a partial violation of the socially accepted norm--a finding Cohen as well as Cloward and Ohlin suggest. However, the number is not large and does not appear to be significant.

Table 14 also suggests that no less than 73.4% and as many as 88.6% of the boys claim moral norms that are in conformity with the socially approved norm. This seems to indicate that delinquents, for the most part, do recognize the socially approved norm and that their moral norms are not in contradiction to the dominant society. However, Table 12 suggests that the attachment of delinquent boys is deviant from society's standards. Thus, while neutralizers and non-neutralizers alike exhibit little behavioral attachment to their moral norms, they do exhibit a high degree of moral attachment to the socially approved norm.

Table 15 is a graphic summation of the findings for all boys thus far presented in this chapter and is intended to portray graphically the difference between the delinquent's moral norms, his perception of peer behavioral norms and his own behavioral attachment in relation to the

TABLE 14
MORAL NORMS BY NEUTRALIZATION*

	Situation I				Situation II			
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Neutralizers	82.2	6.7	11.1	45	67.4	21.7	10.9	46
Non-neutralizers	89.5	7.9	2.6	114	81.6	7.0	11.4	114
Total	87.4	7.5	5.1	159	77.5	11.3	11.2	160
	Chi square = 4.86 p > .05				Chi square = 7.17 ^a p < .05			
	Situation III				Situation IV			
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
Neutralizers	78.7	12.8	8.5	47	63.0	26.1	10.9	46
Non-neutralizers	91.9	6.2	1.8	112	77.7	16.1	6.2	112
Total	88.6	8.2	3.8	158	73.4	18.9	7.6	158
	Chi square = 6.34 ^a p < .05				Chi square = 3.58 p > .05			
	Situation V							
	1	2	3	N				
	%	%	%					
Neutralizers	73.9	17.4	8.7	46				
Non-neutralizers	77.5	13.5	9.0	111				
Total	76.4	14.6	8.9	157				
	Chi square = .39 p > .05							

*Solution 1 refers to the solution closest to socially approved norm, and Solution 3 to the solution most distant or deviant from that norm.

^aSituations I, II, III and IV have over 20 percent expected cell frequencies smaller than five. With the combination of categories 2 and 3, Situation II has a chi square value of 3.01 ($p > .05$) and Situation III has a chi square value of 4.32 ($p < .05$). The chi square value of the other situations did not make any significant change with the combination of solutions 2 and 3.

TABLE 15

CONFORMITY WITH ACCEPTED SOCIAL NORM BY
MORAL NORMS, PERCEPTION OF PEER BEHAVIORAL NORMS
AND DELINQUENT BEHAVIORAL ATTACHMENT*

SITUATION	P	A		M	
I	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

SITUATION	P	A		M	
II	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

SITUATION	P	A		M	
III	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

SITUATION	P	A		M	
IV	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

SITUATION	P	A		M	
V	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

*Legend:

P - perception of peer behavioral norms

A - delinquent behavioral attachment

M - delinquent moral norms

accepted social norm. The differences are indicated by the distance between percentage points as expressed below the base line in each situation. Complete agreement with the accepted social norm is indicated by 100%. The points on the base line correspond to the percent of conformity with the accepted social norm.

Table 15 indicates clearly that while the exact position of the three variables in relation to the accepted social norm varies in each situation, the relative position of each variable does not change in its relationship to the other variables. This is a major point that we wish to make in this section and a point we shall seek to examine more closely in the coming section.

Type of Deviance and Conformity

In the first section, we found that delinquent's behavioral attachment is deviant and that his perception of peer behavioral norms is also deviant from the socially accepted norm. We also noted that his perception of peer behavioral norms was more deviant than his own behavioral attachment; thus, the delinquent is deviant both from his own moral norms and his perception of peer behavioral norms. In this section, we shall consider the direction and implications of this deviance.

In order to consider this question, a comparison of the respondent's behavioral attachment with his perception of peers behavioral norms and his moral norms was made. Also compared was the respondent's moral norms with his perception of peer behavioral norms. On the basis of such a comparison, a typology was derived which allows us to type delinquents into seven categories.

Perceived Behavioral Norms (What Peers would do)
(or Moral Norms--What Delinquents should do)

What delinquents Would Do		Socially Accepted Solution	Compromise Solution	Clearly Deviant Solution
A T T A C H M E N T	Socially Accepted Solution	Positive Conformer	Positive Deviant	Extreme Positive Deviant
	Compromise Solution	Negative Deviant	Compromise Conformer	Positive Deviant
	Clearly Deviant Solution	Extreme Negative Deviant	Negative Deviant	Deviant Conformer

Fig. 5. Types of conforming and deviant behavior¹⁰

¹⁰The author is indebted to Delbert Elliott for providing the conceptual framework for the typology and to Joseph W. Rogers and George R. Peters for their suggestions in its final construction and use. An alternative construction of the typology is presented below.

Type	Behavioral Norms (or moral norms)			Attachment Pattern		
	Accept- able	Compro- mise	Devi- ant	Accept- able	Compro- mise	Devi- ant
Extreme Negative Deviant	+					+
Negative Deviant (I)	+				+	
Negative Deviant (II)		+				+
Positive Conformer	+			+		
Compromise Conformer		+			+	
Deviant Conformer			+			+
Positive Deviant (I)			+		+	
Positive Deviant (II)		+		+		
Extreme Positive Deviant			+	+		

+ signifies that the solution was accepted.

In order to understand the typology in relation to the findings presented in the first section, Fig. 6 is presented below:

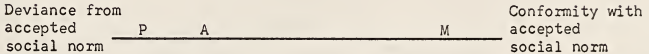


Fig. 6. Graphic portrayal of findings in relation to hypotheses 1-6*

* Legend:

P = Perception of peer behavioral norms
A = Attachment pattern
M = Moral norms

Any attachment to the right of "M" = positive deviant
Any attachment to the left of "M" = negative deviant
Any attachment to the right of "P" = positive deviant
Any attachment to the left of "P" = negative deviant
Any attachment the same as "P" = conformity
Any attachment the same as "M" = conformity
Position of "M" and "P" on base line indicates type of conformity

Using this model for the base of the typology, we see that:

1. An extreme positive deviant is one who perceives the norm in question, whether peer behavioral norm or moral norm, as a complete violation of the accepted social norm and claims that he conforms to the social norm.
2. The extreme negative deviant is one who perceives the norm in question as identical with the accepted social norm and maintains that he would violate that norm.
3. The positive conformer perceives the norm identical with the socially acceptable norm and maintains that he would conform to it.

4. The compromise conformer perceives the norms as a compromise between a clearly deviant solution and the socially acceptable one and maintains that he would conform to the norm as he perceives it.
5. The deviant conformer perceives the norm as clearly deviant from society's point of view and maintains that he would conform to it.
6. The negative deviant represents moderate shift of behavior away from (negative) the accepted social norm.
7. The positive deviant represents a moderate shift of behavior toward (positive) the accepted social norm.

Type of Perceived Deviance From Moral Norms

Table 16 indicates the type of perceived deviance from moral norms by neutralizers and non-neutralizers and also for the respondents as a whole. In general, Table 16 indicates that delinquents tend to perceive themselves as deviating from their own social norm in a negative direction. Also noteworthy, is the fact that no less than 16 percent and as many as 31 percent perceived their moral norm and their compliance as the same and that both represented conformity with the socially accepted norm (positive conformists). In this regard, a larger proportion of non-neutralizers were positive conformists than were neutralizers. Further, a larger proportion of neutralizers than non-neutralizers perceived themselves as either negative or extreme negative deviants. These findings, coupled with the findings noted in Table 14, suggest that neutralizers perceive themselves as deviating negatively from their own moral norm and that their compliance is negatively deviant from the accepted social norm. This indicates that either (a) neutralizers (and delinquents in general) are not conformers as Matza and Sykes suggest or

TABLE 16
TYPE OF DEVIANCE OF DELINQUENTS FROM MORAL NORMS

Respondents	Extreme positive deviant	Positive deviant	Positive conformists	Compromise conformists	Deviant conformists	Negative deviant	Extreme negative deviant	N
Situation I								
Neutralizers	4.4	0.0	20.0	2.2	6.7	20.0	46.7	45
Non-neutralizers	0.9	3.5	35.1	0.9	1.8	19.2	38.6	114
Total per cent	1.9	2.5	30.8	1.3	3.1	19.5	40.9	159
Situation II								
Neutralizers	2.2	13.0	15.2	8.7	6.5	34.8	19.6	46
Non-neutralizers	4.4	5.3	33.3	2.6	3.5	23.7	27.2	114
Total per cent	3.8	7.5	28.1	4.4	4.4	26.9	25.0	160
Situation III								
Neutralizers	2.1	6.4	12.8	4.3	4.3	19.1	51.1	47
Non-neutralizers	0.0	3.6	31.3	0.9	1.8	12.5	50.0	112
Total per cent	0.6	4.4	25.8	1.9	2.5	14.5	50.3	159
Situation IV								
Neutralizers	0.0	13.0	8.7	2.2	6.5	30.4	39.1	46
Non-neutralizers	3.6	2.7	19.6	1.8	2.7	30.4	39.1	112
Total per cent	2.5	5.7	16.5	1.9	3.8	31.0	38.6	158
Situation V								
Neutralizers	2.2	8.7	23.9	4.3	2.2	36.9	21.7	46
Non-neutralizers	2.7	8.1	34.2	4.5	1.8	36.9	11.7	111
Total per cent	2.5	8.3	31.2	4.5	1.9	36.9	14.6	157

(b) that they are conforming to some norm other than their own moral norm or the socially acceptable one.

Type of Perceived Deviance from Peer Behavioral Norms

Table 17 shows the type of deviance by delinquents from their perception of peers behavioral norms. In general, delinquents tend to perceive themselves as either deviant conformers or as deviating positively from their perception of peer behavioral norms. In every situation, the neutralizers were more likely to perceive of themselves as deviant conformists than were the non-neutralizers; while on the other hand, the non-neutralizers were more likely to perceive of themselves as extreme positive deviants than were the neutralizers. This suggests that neutralizers are conformists even though the norm they conform to is deviant from society's standpoint.

Delinquents in general and neutralizers in particular, perceive their behavior as negatively deviant from their own moral norms and they perceive their behavior as in conformity with their peer's behavioral norms or deviating from it in a positive direction. It should be remembered, however, that, as indicated in Table 11, their perception of peer's behavioral norms is markedly deviant from the socially acceptable norm.

Here we might raise a question. In relation to their moral norms, do delinquents perceive their own behavior or the behavioral norms of peers more deviant? The answer to this question, as indicated in Table 18, suggests that delinquents do, indeed, maintain that their own behavioral attachment is closer to the socially acceptable norm than

TABLE 17
TYPE OF PERCEIVED DEVIANCE FROM BEHAVIORAL NORMS

Respondents	Extreme positive deviant		Positive deviant		Positive conformists		Compromise conformists		Deviant conformists		Negative deviant		Extreme negative deviant	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Situation I														
Neutralizers	11.1		15.6		8.9		4.4		53.3		4.4		2.2	45
Non-neutralizers	26.5		13.3		7.9		6.2		31.9		8.8		5.3	113
Total per cent	22.2		13.9		8.2		5.7		37.9		7.6		4.4	158
Situation II														
Neutralizers	8.6		21.7		10.8		23.9		21.7		13.4		0.0	46
Non-neutralizers	17.5		18.4		11.4		16.7		20.2		11.4		4.4	114
Total per cent	15.0		19.4		11.3		18.8		20.6		11.9		3.1	160
Situation III														
Neutralizers	8.5		19.1		6.4		4.3		51.1		8.5		2.1	47
Non-neutralizers	23.2		9.8		10.7		1.8		44.6		3.6		6.3	112
Total per cent	18.9		12.6		9.4		2.5		46.5		5.0		5.0	159
Situation IV														
Neutralizers	8.7		19.6		6.5		4.3		50.0		4.3		6.5	46
Non-neutralizers	10.7		17.9		10.7		7.1		45.5		4.5		3.6	112
Total per cent	10.1		18.4		9.5		6.3		46.8		4.4		4.4	158
Situation V														
Neutralizers	8.7		19.6		17.3		17.3		10.9		17.3		8.7	46
Non-neutralizers	9.1		21.8		20.0		21.8		10.0		15.5		1.8	110
Total per cent	8.9		21.2		19.2		20.5		10.3		16.0		3.8	156

TABLE 18

TYPE OF DEVIANCE FROM MORAL NORMS AND PERCEPTION OF DEVIANCE
OF PEER BEHAVIORAL NORMS FROM MORAL NORMS

Norms	Extreme positive deviant	Positive deviant	Positive conformists	Compromise conformists	Deviant conformists	Negative deviant	Extreme negative deviant	N
Situation I								
Self-perception	1.9	2.5	30.8	1.3	3.1	19.5	40.9	159
Perception of peers	0.6	3.7	12.5	1.2	3.8	16.9	61.3	160
Situation II								
Self-perception	3.8	7.5	28.1	4.4	4.4	26.9	25.0	160
Perception of peers	3.1	6.2	12.4	4.3	4.3	32.9	36.6	161
Situation III								
Self-perception	0.6	4.4	25.8	1.9	2.5	14.5	50.3	159
Perception of peers	0.0	3.1	13.1	1.3	3.1	10.6	68.8	160
Situation IV								
Self-perception	2.5	5.7	16.5	1.9	3.8	31.0	38.6	158
Perception of peers	0.6	3.8	12.6	2.5	4.4	23.9	52.2	159
Situation V								
Self-perception	2.5	8.3	31.2	4.5	1.9	36.9	14.6	157
Perception of peers	3.8	7.7	20.4	5.1	3.2	35.0	24.8	157

the behavioral norms of peers. The delinquents were more likely to perceive their own behavior as positively conforming to the social norm and they were more likely to perceive peer behavioral norms as more negatively deviant than their own.

Summary and Conclusions

We have found that delinquents hold two sets of norms. One set, which we call moral norms, closely corresponds to the socially accepted norm. It is these norms that Matza and Sykes suggest the delinquent must neutralize in order to commit deviant acts.¹¹ Cloward and Ohlin, on the other hand, suggest that the delinquent is alienated from these norms.¹²

Secondly, it was found that delinquents perceive another set of norms, markedly different from their moral norms, which we have called behavioral norms. These behavioral norms are the norms that delinquents view as the model pattern of behavior as expressed by boys their own age.¹³

Overall, the delinquents showed only a slight attachment to the socially acceptable pattern of behavior; further, neutralizers showed less attachment than did the non-neutralizers. When delinquent

¹¹ See: footnote 3.

¹² See: footnote 5.

¹³ It should be noted that behavioral norms of peers do not specify delinquent peers. The question reads: "What do you think MOST FELLOWS YOUR AGE would do?" and not what most boys you know or most boys who have been in trouble. This distinction was made so that the boys' referent would not be other delinquents, but all boys in their age group.

attachment to the socially approved norm was compared with their perception of the behavioral norms of peers, it was found that delinquent boys perceive themselves more in conformity with the socially accepted norm than their peers.

When the delinquents' attachment was compared with their moral norms, it was found that delinquents perceive themselves as negative deviants. The neutralizers were more likely to perceive themselves as negatively deviating from their moral norms than were the non-neutralizers, and the non-neutralizers were more likely to perceive themselves as positive conformist than were the neutralizers.

When the delinquent attachment was compared with their perception of behavioral norms, it was found that they perceived their behavior to be either in conformity with their perception of behavioral norms or deviating from it positively. Neutralizers were more likely to perceive themselves as conforming to behavioral norms while non-neutralizers were more likely to perceive their behavior as deviating positively from behavioral norms.

Finally, it was found that delinquents were more likely to perceive their behavior as positively conforming to the accepted social norm than they were to perceive the behavioral norms of peers. They were also less likely to perceive their behavior as negatively deviating from the accepted social norm.¹⁴

¹⁴Wheeler found that inmates perceived staff attitudes and opinions as highly opposed to their own; however, he found that actual differences were not as great as those perceived. This process seems to be the same between the delinquent's perception of behavioral norms

These findings suggest that delinquents do know what is expected of them by society in terms of behavior. They also believe that the ideal pattern of behavior is not the actual or real pattern of behavior as expressed by their perception of peer behavioral norms. This suggests that delinquents may claim, as Matza and Sykes as well as Redl and Wineman suggest, that their behavior is not deviant, but conforming behavior. It is clear that the delinquent does deviate from these norms which he recognizes as socially and morally right and that he believes that these norms are not followed by the great majority of his age peers.

Kemper has made the distinction between three types of reference groups which seems applicable here.¹⁵ His description of the normative reference group closely corresponds to that group which defines the delinquent's moral norms.

These are groups, collectivities, or persons that provide the actor with a guide to action by explicitly setting norms and espousing values Their principal function is to direct the individual into conformity with the basic cultural patterns¹⁶

The second type of reference group Kemper calls "comparison groups." "This is the group which the actor employs when a question arises as to the legitimacy of his behavior or opinions."¹⁷ We would

and actual behavioral norms. Stanton Wheeler, "Role Conflict in Correctional Communities," in Donald R. Cressey (ed.) The Prison: Studies in Institutional Organization and Change (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 229-259.

¹⁵Theodore D. Kemper, "Reference Groups, Socialization and Achievement," American Sociological Review, XXXIII (February, 1968), 31-45.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 32 and 35.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 33.

suggest that the comparison reference group for delinquent boys is his perception of behavioral norms.

Finally, the third and perhaps the most important reference group for the delinquent is the audience. The audience reference group for the delinquent boy is that close peer group in which delinquent plans are made and delinquent acts are carried out--the situation of company.

The actor, however, attributes certain values to an audience group and attempts to behave in accordance with those values. The audience group may have expressed its values in some concrete instance so they are known to the actor, or the imputation of values to the audience may be purely a matter of speculation by the actor. In either case, the actor will be guided by what he understands his audience's values to be.¹⁸

In making this distinction, it is suggested that delinquents not only recognize the dominant social norm, but also recognize that they should comply with that norm. However, in the situation of delinquent company (it should be remembered that only 7.1% of the non-neutralizers and 4.5% of the neutralizers, believed that their friends were opposed to their behavior) a second reference group comes into play. Miller and Cohen point out that it is from this group that the delinquent boy gains status and that the boy who does not comply with the norms of the group risks exclusion.¹⁹ While boys may not wish to violate their

¹⁸Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁹Walter B. Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency," Journal of Social Issues, XIV (1958), 8; Albert K. Cohen, Delinquent Boys (New York: The Free Press, 1955), pp. 65-67.

own moral norms, membership within the delinquent group often requires that they do so.²⁰

With the conflict between moral norms and the norms of the audience reference group thus presented, it would appear that the decision to violate one norm or the other would have to be made.²¹ In some cases, the decision is made to withdraw from the delinquent group; in other cases, it appears that the delinquent withdraws his sentiments supporting the dominant value system--a solution which Cloward and Ohlin suggest. Indeed, Table 14 suggests that some delinquents' moral norms deviate from the dominant social norm. However, what is suggested here is that most delinquents either learn to recognize (or create the myth) that the generalized order of the larger social order does not always conform to the dominant social norm. By emphasizing the imaginary or real contradiction between dominant social norms and dominant behavioral patterns, the delinquent creates for himself a technique of neutralization reinforced by a third reference group--the comparative reference group.

The delinquent learns that by comparing his own deviant behavior to the failures of others to live up to society's norms, he may view his behavior not as deviant but as conforming. Indeed, our data suggest

²⁰The appeal to higher loyalties could well be one solution to such a conflict.

²¹Stouffer has suggested that in such a conflict situation the individual may seek to conform to one of the other norms or he may seek some sort of compromise position. The delinquent's belief that behavioral norms are more deviant than his own seems to allow him to make the compromise Stouffer suggests. Samuel A. Stouffer, "An Analysis of Conflict-ing Social Norms," American Sociological Review, XIV (December, 1949), 707-717.

that he is less deviant than the behavior of his comparative reference group (the positive or extreme positive deviant).

Schwendinger and Schwendinger noted in their study that delinquent objectors were almost entirely concerned with tactical rather than moral issues.²² Baum and Wheeler have also noted in their research the concern for getting caught expressed by delinquents.²³ Their research lead both groups to suggest that responsibility and concern for getting caught takes precedence over any concern for behavior contradictory to the dominant social norm.

We wish to suggest an alternative explanation for this concern in the light of findings presented in this chapter. The delinquent is aware that his behavior is non-conforming in relation to the dominant moral and legal norms of society and he takes steps to insure that his behavior will not be detected and he will not be punished for his activity. The delinquent also believes, as indicated by his perception of behavioral norms, that most people do not conform to the moral and

²²Herman Schwendinger and Julia Schwendinger, "Delinquent Stereotypes of Probable Victims," in Malcolm W. Klein (editor), Juvenile Gangs in Context (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 91-105. They divided delinquents into two groups, one group was to argue for certain delinquent activities and were called the "proponents" and those to argue against the activity were called "objectors." They hypothesized that objectors would seize upon moral issues in arguing against the act thus challenging its legitimacy. Not finding this to be so, they rejected the Matza and Sykes thesis. However, they failed to report the argument made by the delinquent proponents which may well have centered around techniques of neutralization.

²³Martha Baum and Stanton Wheeler "Becoming an Inmate," in Stanton Wheeler (editor), Controlling Delinquents (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), p. 172.

law norms of society. In this context, we would expect that delinquents may very well express concern with the problem of failure. "Getting caught" represents failure, for if we understand that delinquents perceive that most people do deviate from the acceptable social norms and most people are not caught or punished for that deviation, getting caught represents a failure to which most people are not subject. Expression of concern over moral conflict would not be expected because behavior is neutralized and indeed, perceived to be either conforming or positively deviant (note Table 17) and not negatively deviant from their perception of behavioral norms.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It was the purpose of this study to investigate some of the Matza and Sykes propositions regarding neutralization. In order to accomplish this end, data were collected on delinquent boys at the Boys Industrial School in Topeka, Kansas.

Neutralization

The dependent variable for this study was degree of neutralization of delinquent boys. The Guttman scaling technique was employed in order to scale nine statements regarding possible neutralization techniques. After scaling, two of the statements were eliminated leaving seven in the final scale. Statements dealing with assessment of responsibility and denial of victim proved the easiest. These two findings appear to be consistent with the findings of other researchers.

Schwendinger and Schwendinger found that delinquents learn to view probable victims in stereotypes which justify their victimization.¹ Consistent with their findings, we found the second easiest statement

¹Herman Schwendinger and Julia Schwendinger, "Delinquent Stereotypes of Probable Victims," in Malcolm W. Klein (editor), Juvenile Gangs in Context (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

with which delinquents could agree was that: "If anyone was hurt by what I did, they either deserved it or could afford it."

Baum and Wheeler found youth who mentioned others as responsible for their troubles were much more likely to mention other youths than anyone else.² Again, this finding is consistent with our findings in that the statement found to be the easiest to agree with was: "I got into trouble because I got in with the wrong boys."

Both of these findings seem to be consistent with the Matza and Sykes formulations. First, Matza and Sykes suggest that delinquents learn to deny probable victims any of the normal prerogatives. Instead, they are viewed as individuals either deserving punishment or lacking any right to initiate the criminal process. Thus, by stereotyping the victim, the problem of guilt and moral conflict is deflected.

Second, Matza suggests that delinquents are, themselves, not committed to their misdeeds; but, they exhibit behavior suggesting commitment because they believe that others in the group are so committed. The willingness of delinquents to blame their friends for their trouble suggests conformation of this proposition.

Delinquent's Peer Group

The first set of variables that were treated with neutralization were variables relating to knowledge and intimacy with other delinquents

²Martha Baum and Stanton Wheeler, "Becoming an Inmate," in Stanton Wheeler (editor), Controlling Delinquents (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968).

and adult criminals. We found that in both cases (the number of delinquent peers known and the intimacy of association with delinquent peers, and the number of adult criminals known and intimacy with them) that there was no significant statistical relationship between them and neutralization.

The Situation of Company

The situation of company consisted of two variables. The first concerned the number of delinquent peers who knew about the boy's delinquent behavior before it was carried out, and the second concerned the perception of support the boys received for their delinquent behavior. It was found that both of the variables bore no significant statistical relationship to neutralization.

The general variables of "delinquent peer group" and "situations of company" were considered because Sykes and Matza, in the Sutherland tradition, suggest that the techniques of neutralization provide part of the specific content of what is learned in the normal course of events from the dominant society.

The values behind much juvenile delinquency are far less deviant than they are commonly portrayed; and . . . the faulty picture is due to a gross over-simplification of the middle-class value system.³

Race

The boys were divided into two groups: Whites or majority group members and Negroes, American Indians and Mexican-Americans or minority

³David Matza and Gresham M. Sykes, "Juvenile Delinquency and Subterranean Values," American Sociological Review, XXVI (November, 1961), 713.

group members. When these two groups were compared with the variable of neutralization, a significant relationship was found to exist between the two. Over twice as many minority group members were neutralizers as majority group members. This finding suggests that minority group members' neutralizations are expressions of their view of reality. However, through the use of controls and correlation of scale items, it was found that the minority group did not represent a separate group of neutralizers.

Norms

In Chapter IV, we considered two types of norms: behavioral norms (perception of the behavior of peers) and moral norms (perception of what should be done, i.e., what is "right" and "just"). We also considered the behavioral attachment or conformity of the boys to these two norms.

While we found little statistical evidence to support our hypothesis, we found consistently repeating trends which suggested several things. First, delinquents tended to perceive the behavioral norms of peers as deviant from what the social norm is said to be. Second, we found that delinquents' moral norms tended to be the socially approved norm; however, we also noted that a substantial minority had moral norms which were clearly deviant from the socially acceptable ones. On the whole, these two findings suggest that delinquents perceive at least two sets of norms--one set which should be complied with (moral norms) and a second set which exemplifies actual behavior (behavioral norms).

We also considered the behavioral attachment of delinquents. In this regard, it was found that delinquents tended to show more attachment to the compromise or clearly deviant norm (from society's point of view).

Finally, we compared the behavioral attachment of delinquents with their perception of peer behavioral norms. Here, it was found that delinquents perceived their behavior in closer conformity with the social norm than they perceived the behavioral norms of peers.

At this point, we raised the question: If delinquents are conforming to a set of norms, what are these norms and from where do they come? In order to answer this question, a typology was devised that allowed us to classify responses by type of deviance from a given norm.

In general, it was found that delinquents tended to perceive their behavior as negatively deviating from their own moral norms. Neutralizers showed a greater tendency in this direction than did non-neutralizers; in either case, however, the trend was the same.

When delinquent attachment was compared with their perception of peer behavioral norms, a different picture appeared. In this case, delinquents tended to perceive their behavior as either deviant conformity or as deviating positively from their perception of peer behavioral norms. This finding lead us to suggest that delinquents may indeed claim that their behavior is not deviant, but conforming. Of interest, however, is that delinquents tend to conform to a deviant norm. Neutralizers tended to be deviant conformers more than did non-neutralizers which only lends strength to the argument made by Redl and Wineman that delinquents justify their behavior on the grounds that it is the dominant form of conduct.

Finally, when we compared the boys judgment of their own behavior in relation to their moral norms with their judgment of peer behavioral norms in relation to the same norms, we found that delinquents felt that peer behavioral norms were more negatively deviant than their own behavior. They also felt that they were more positively conforming than were their peers.

These findings lead us to suggest that delinquents point up and use discrepancies between the ideal pattern of behavior thought to be "right", "just" and "correct" and the model pattern of behavior as it is perceived to exist as a means for justifying their own deviant behavior. Indeed, by accenting others' deviant behavior and failure to live up to the dominant social norms, one's own deviant behavior becomes conforming or even deviant in a positive direction.

Implications for Treatment and Correction

In the light of the findings and conclusions made in this thesis, a brief comment on the prospects for treatment and corrections is in order. "Reality Therapy," discussed earlier in this thesis, appears to be an appropriate technique with which to confront neutralizations.⁴ This technique emphasizes to the offender his own personal responsibility for his behavior independent of his past history, or his view of how other people may conduct their behavior.

⁴William Glasser, "Reality Therapy," Crime and Delinquency, X (April, 1964), 135-144.

The Provo experiment in delinquency rehabilitation also attacks the problem of delinquency neutralization.⁵ This treatment form forces the delinquent to make a realistic appraisal of his behavior, i.e., to recognize that if his deviant behavior continues, he will continue to be institutionalized. At the same time, the approach makes use of the delinquent gang or peer group in affecting a change. Matza and Sykes suggest that the delinquent believes that his peers are committed to their deviant behavior; by the use of group therapy, the Provo experiment makes the delinquent aware of the consequences of his non-conforming behavior and seeks to establish consensus within the group as to realistic alternatives. This approach seems worth while, in that it side-steps any neutralization techniques and seeks to use the delinquent's friends and peers as reinforcing agents in seeking realistic alternatives to deviant behavior.

It appears to this author, that any attempt at rehabilitation must seek to impress upon the offender that regardless of how he may view his own behavior and the behavior of others, he must contend with official laws and regulations and the alternative course must include rewards that are meaningful to the delinquent.

⁵Lamar T. Empey and Jerome Rabow, "The Provo Experiment in Delinquency Rehabilitation," American Sociological Review, XXVI (October, 1961), 679-695.

The Highfields Project, which was also an experiment in rehabilitation, attempts to solve the neutralization problem. Although the program called for short-term treatment, it recognized the use of certain neutralization techniques and made attempts to deny their use by delinquents. H. Ashley Weeks, "The Highfields Project," in Juvenile Delinquency: A Book of Readings, Rose Giallombardo (editor). (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), pp. 517-530.

Suggestions for Research

Several improvements might be made in this research and should be considered in any duplication or enlargement of this study.

First, the use of a non-delinquent control group should prove useful. However, the use of a non-delinquent sample would require some major revisions of the neutralization scale. The scale would have to be made applicable to both delinquent and non-delinquent populations. Elliott's use of the concept of "blame orientation" does not seem to be the best answer in this regard because it lacks the ability to differentiate the various types of neutralization.⁶

Herman and Julia Schwendinger's use of role playing situations in which respondents are assigned roles of objectors and proponents is not easy to assess.⁷ It does not seem to differentiate types of neutralization as they have reported it; thus, it faces the same basic criticism made of Elliott's instrument even though both instruments make delinquent and non-delinquent responses comparable. Certainly, a non-delinquent sample would prove useful, especially in regard to types of norms and attachment as discussed in Chapter IV; however, the major problem in this regard would be the creation of neutralization items that would be meaningful to both groups.

⁶Delbert S. Elliott, Delinquency, Opportunity and Patterns of Orientation. (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University of Washington, 1961), pp. 140-149.

⁷Schwendinger and Schwendinger op. cit., pp. 91-105.

Second, the problem of non-responses encountered in this study might well be avoided by the use of private interviews. Respondents could be probed regarding specific questions. This would seem especially useful in the construction of a neutralization scale and in questions concerning intimacy with other delinquents.

Another suggestion for improvement concerns the neutralization items, themselves. The number of items in the instrument should be increased so that better use could be made of the Guttman scaling technique. Also, an increase in the number of items would provide a larger number of alternative items to be typed in the final scale.

Finally, a section of the questionnaire which included specific questions designed for the minority group in the sample would prove helpful, specifically questions designed to deal with perceived opportunity for success, perception of discrimination and identification with dominant White middle-class values and society.

While more research is certainly needed on neutralization among delinquents and adult criminals, another area of research also presents promising rewards to theory construction. This is the study of "white collar crimes" and employee pilfering.⁸ If social norms may be violated without surrendering allegiance to them, it is in the study of white collar crimes and employee pilfering that the most intense study and research is needed.

⁸See: Edwin H. Sutherland, "White Collar Criminality," American Sociological Review, V (February, 1940), 1-12; Edwin H. Sutherland, "Is White Collar Crime 'Crime'?" American Sociological Review, X (April, 1945), 132-137; Edwin H. Sutherland, "Crime and Business," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCXVII (September, 1941), 112-118; and Vilhelm Aubert, "White Collar Crime and Social Structure," American Journal of Sociology, LVIII (November, 1952), 263-371.

APPENDIX

PART I

1. Date of Birth _____
Mo. Day Year
2. Race. Circle correct answer.
 - a. Negro
 - b. White
3. Father's education. Circle the last grade completed.
 - a. Elementary (1 through 6)
 - b. Junior High (7, 8 & 9)
 - c. High School (10, 11, & 12)
 - d. College Graduate
4. Family Status. Circle the correct answer.
 - a. Parents living together
 - b. Divorced
 - c. Separated
 - d. Mother dead
 - e. Father dead
 - f. Both parents dead
5. In whose home do you normally live? Circle the correct answer.
 - a. Your parents
 - b. Relatives
 - c. Foster Home
 - d. Other _____

6. What kind of work does your father do? If your father is dead or retired, what kind of work was he last doing? (Be specific. For example, aircraft mechanic, high school teacher, milk truck driver, etc.)

7. When you are home, how often do you go to church? Circle the correct answer.
 - a. Never
 - b. Less than once a month
 - c. About once a month
 - d. About two times a month
 - e. About once a week
8. How many brothers do you have and what are their ages? (Include half-brothers)
 - a. None
 - b. 1 _____ age
 - c. 2 _____ ages
 - d. 3 _____ ages
 - e. 4 _____ ages
 - f. 5 _____ ages
 - g. - _____ ages
9. How many sisters do you have and what are their ages? (Include half-sisters)
 - a. None
 - b. 1 _____ age
 - c. 2 _____ ages
 - d. 3 _____ ages
 - e. 4 _____ ages
 - f. 5 _____ ages
 - g. - _____ ages

PART II

The following is a list of statements which may or may not describe your feelings and opinion. If the statement is true about yourself, circle the (T) to the left of the statement; if the statement is not true of you, circle the (F) to the left of the statement.

- T F I would have been more successful if people had given me a fair chance.
- T F Life usually hands me a pretty bad deal.
- T F A person is better off if he doesn't trust anyone.
- T F My parents are too strict with me most of the time.
- T F Even when I have gotten into trouble, I was usually trying to do the right thing.
- T F I think I am stricter about right and wrong than most people.
- T F My parents have often disapproved of my friends.
- T F It is pretty easy for people to win arguments with me.
- T F It is hard for me to act natural when I am with new people.
- T F When something goes wrong, I usually blame myself rather than the other person.
- T F I know who is responsible for most of my troubles.
- T F People often talk about me behind my back.
- T F I often feel as though I have done something wrong or wicked.
- T F I don't think I'm quite as happy as others seem to be.
- T F The members of my family were always very close to each other.
- T F I am often punished unfairly.
- T F My home life was always very pleasant.
- T F I go out of my way to find trouble rather than try to escape it.
- T F When I meet a stranger, I often think he is better than I am.
- T F With things going as they are, it's pretty hard to keep up hope of amounting to something.

PART III

In this section, you will find a number of problems that anyone might have to face. You are to make a choice among the several possible solutions to each problem. After reading each problem and the solutions offered, you are to answer three questions:

- 1) What do you think MOST FELLOWS YOUR AGE would do?
- 2) What would you do?
- 3) What should you do?

Situation 1

You find a billfold on the sidewalk. There is nobody around. Upon examining it, you find that it contains \$15.00 and an identification card. You discover that you know the person who lost the billfold, but he is not one of your good friends.

Solutions

- a. Take the money and send the billfold back to the owner by dropping it in a mailbox.
- b. Return the money and the billfold to the owner.
- c. Take the money and throw the billfold away.

What would most fellows your age do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What would you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What should you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

Situation 2

The teacher has passed exam papers back for you to see. You discover that he has made an error in adding and has given you 10 extra points. These points will mean whether you pass or fail.

Solutions

- a. Return the paper as you got it and hope the teacher doesn't notice his mistake.
- b. Change your answers on the paper to fit the score you have so the teacher cannot find the mistake he made.

c. Tell the teacher he made an error in adding up your score.

What would most fellows your age do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What would you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What should you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

Situation 3

You walk into the men's restroom at the beach. There is no one else there but you. On the floor you see an expensive men's watch.

Solution

a. Leave the watch lying where you saw it.

b. Keep the watch and say nothing.

c. Turn the watch in to the beach office.

What would most fellows your age do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What would you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What should you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

Situation 4

You are buying cokes for all the gang after the ball game. When you put your money into the coke machine, you discover that it will not take your money but will give you free cokes.

Solutions

a. Say nothing and get all the free cokes you need.

b. Tell the owner and pay for the cokes.

c. Tell the owner that the machine will not take your money, but do not let him know that you have gotten free cokes.

What would most fellows your age do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What would you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What should you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

Situation 5

You ask a girl you think is real good-looking to go to the school dance with you. She says that she would really like to go with you, but she was out too late last week and her parents won't let her go. So, you ask someone else (not nearly so cute). The second girl accepts and all the plans are made. The afternoon before the dance, the girl you asked first calls and tells you that she talked her parents into letting her go after all. You would really rather go with her.

Solutions

- a. Tell her you are sorry, but you have another date.
- b. Tell her that you will pick her up at 7 P.M. and stand up the second girl.
- c. Tell her that you will pick her up at 7 P.M. and call the second girl and give her some excuse why you can't go and hope she doesn't show up at the dance.

What would most fellows your age do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What would you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

What should you do? _____ (indicate a, b, or c)

PART IV

Below are a group of questions about the closeness of you and your friends. Read each question and circle only one answer for each question.

1. How many boys did you know who had been in trouble with the police at one time or another before you came to the B.I.S.? Don't count traffic violations.
 - a. None
 - b. 1 or 2
 - c. 3 to 5
 - d. 6 to 10
 - e. over 10
2. If you circled b, c, d, or e: Approximately how well did you know most of the boys who had been in trouble with the police?
 - a. Just know their names
 - b. Speak to them sometimes
 - c. Spend some time with them
 - d. Am good friend of theirs
3. How many adults do you know who have been in jail or prison?
 - a. None
 - b. 1 or 2
 - c. 3 to 5
 - d. over 5

PART V

The following are statements about the reason or reasons you are here at the B.I.S. and how you feel about it. Mark only one answer for each statement.

- (1) I got into trouble because I got in with the wrong boys.
_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
- (2) I have no one to blame but myself for being sent to the B.I.S.
_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
- (3) I deserved to be sent to the B.I.S.
_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
- (4) The trouble was an accident, which I could not help.
_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
- (5) What I did was not so bad, no one was really hurt.
_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree
- (6) If anyone was hurt by what I did, they either deserved it or could afford it.
_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree

- (7) Unfair teachers are to blame for my being sent to the B.I.S.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree

- (8) The judge and the court were against me from the start.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree

- (9) I got into trouble because I couldn't run out on my friends.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree

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EXPLORATIONS IN NEUTRALIZATION

by

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B. S., Arkansas State College, 1966

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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MASTER OF ARTS

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This research represents an empirical study of several propositions concerning the concept of neutralization formulated by David Matza and Gresham Sykes. Three major areas were investigated. First, the various techniques of neutralization were considered. Second, the relationship between neutralization and certain reference group variables were explored; and finally, the relationship between neutralization and certain types of norms were examined.

Data were collected from 80% of the delinquent boys incarcerated at the Boys Industrial School in Topeka, Kansas in July, 1967. A five-page self-administered questionnaire was given to 170 boys in groups of from 10 to 15. The data were then coded, placed on IBM cards and processed on high-speed computers. The principal correlational measure was Gamma; hypotheses were tested utilizing the .05 level of significance.

The analysis of the data revealed that seven neutralization items were scalable using the Guttman scaling technique. The resultant quasi-scale of the seven items revealed that the more neutralizations an individual can accomplish, the more likely he is to deny the justice of his institutionalization.

It was hypothesized that the use of neutralization techniques would be directly related to perception of support and integration in deviant groups. This hypothesis was suggested because it was believed that neutralization techniques are learned and reinforced primarily by one's delinquent and criminal peers. However, the hypothesis was not supported by evidence, which led us to the alternative suggestion that

neutralization techniques are learned from and reinforced through the conventional value system of society.

Finally, it was found that delinquents held two sets of norms. One set, which we call moral norms, closely resembles those norms which are accepted as "right" and "just" by the dominant society. The second set, called behavioral norms, are those norms which are perceived by the delinquent as the model form of behavior of their age peers (including both delinquents and non-delinquents). This second normative set is markedly deviant from the delinquent's own moral norms. Delinquent behavioral attachment was compared with the two types of norms. A typology of conforming and deviant behavior was developed which included seven types. Among the findings, two of considerable theoretical importance were that delinquents believe themselves to be: (a) either positive deviants or conformers to their perception of behavioral norms; and (b) negative deviants from their moral norms. This suggests that delinquents believe themselves to be no more deviant or even less deviant than their age peers.

It is necessary that these be verified through subsequent research which includes both delinquent and non-delinquent populations.